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# JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY



## The next National Security Strategy

### Written evidence

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## **Written Evidence to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy: Priorities for the 2015 NSS**

### **Executive Summary**

- Multipolarity – a situation of multiple great powers – is returning to the international system, as new great powers rise through the convergence growth produced by post-Cold War economic globalization.
- Such dynamics of relative rise and decline tend to produce major power competition and conflict incentives, with the potential to cause war unless other factors intervene.
- In light of the destructive potential of major power conflict, which dwarfs that of other contemporary security concerns such as terrorism, guarding against it should be the prime focus of UK national security strategy (and at least receive more attention than found in the 2010 NSS): it need not be imminent – or even particularly likely – to still qualify as the greatest danger, now that it is no longer wholly inconceivable, given its severity.
- While Western major powers in general are in decline vis-à-vis the rising 'BRICs', Britain's economic outlook is actually relatively positive by European standards: so *within* Western Europe, the UK may actually qualify as a rising power, which will impact both the security benefits and burdens that we encounter in the years ahead.
- Within Western Europe, interstate peace is reinforced by an array of strategic, normative, cultural, and institutional factors – however, the negative consequences of the return of great power competition in the wider world will still impact the European and UK security environments, in five key ways.
  1. The resurgence of Russia: globalization-driven growth has given Russia the military wherewithal – which may expand further, if global oil prices recover – to go with its political incentives to weaken NATO, particularly around its borders. As such, there is once again a hostile major power threat in Europe that poses a territorial threat to our allies, will likely seek to coerce us militarily, and is already confronting NATO forces in a way that creates a danger of potentially-unintended escalation.
  2. The US 'pivot' to Asia: the resurgence of Russia would not otherwise be a serious security concern for the UK, except for the fact that the defence of Europe is no longer the United States' principal strategic concern, focused as it is on balancing China. As such, European states – the UK foremost amongst them – will increasingly have to carry the burden of supplying European security and balancing Russia.
  3. International military crises: under US unipolarity, the United States could pacify all other major power relationships by threatening to defeat one or – if necessary – both parties to a conflict, thus rendering aggression futile. Under multipolarity, by contrast, this is no longer the case – and both rising and declining powers may have reason to instigate crises to advance their interests.

4. Vulnerable sea lines of communication (SLOCs): a key manifestation of the return of great power competition is likely to be additional maritime contestation in areas essential to our economic viability as an import-dependent island power reliant on seaborne energy and raw materials, including the Northeast Atlantic, Persian Gulf, and Suez region. Such threats to SLOCs could compel UK involvement in a crisis.
  5. Nuclear proliferation risks: a world of multiple competing major powers is likely to be one in which many states are attracted by the deterrent and coercive leverage provided by nuclear weapons. At the very least, this will create an uncondusive environment for nuclear disarmament efforts – and possibly worse.
- These security threats in turn point towards the incorporation of five core principles by the 2015 NSS.
    1. We must prioritise threats based on their relative danger, rather than just likelihood – which in practice means devoting more effort to hedging against powerful hostile states than has been the norm since 1989.
    2. We must not conflate threats to global human security with threats to UK national security.
    3. We must not mistake international activism for national security: status is not the same thing as safety.
    4. We must emphasise deterrence, containment, and the preservation of national strength by eschewing low-priority commitments that lack a strong national security rationale.
    5. We must preserve a balanced military capability set – even if that looks inefficient in the short term.
  - These core principles can, in turn, be used to derive implications for the following specific policy areas (discussed in order): resourcing national security, nuclear deterrence, choice of grand-strategic posture, cyber deterrence, SLOC protection, prioritisation of regional commitments, nuclear proliferation policy, responses to terrorism, humanitarian intervention, responding to climate-/resource-induced conflict, and alliance policy.
  - Certain key caveats are also in order: the BRICs' current economic slowdown could turn into a more permanent stall or reversal of their rise, and the UK could choose self-defeating policies that weaken our strategic position.

## **Introduction**

1. The purpose of this evidence submission is to address the question of the UK's national security priorities out to 2035, so as to inform the 2015 UK National Security Strategy (NSS) and the subsequent Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR). It does this by discussing the security implications of – and appropriate UK strategic responses to – the return of great power competition to the international system: a consequence of the ongoing relative economic rise of the so-called 'BRICs' (Brazil, Russia, India, and China). It recognises that this is not the only national security concern that the UK faces in the next two decades – but it will make the case that it is by far and away the most important. Post-

Cold War international politics has been shaped profoundly by the absence of great power competition: a product of the United States' unmatched and unprecedented economic and military preponderance between 1989 and today. The freedom that Britain has enjoyed to engage in extra-regional humanitarian intervention, expeditionary counter-terrorism, and state-building far from home have all been contingent on the fact that state-based threats to UK vital interests have been weak or non-existent. To an extent, this has been a nice problem to have: international politics has rarely been so benign at the major power level. Yet it has also engendered an inability to prioritise national security tasks, a proclivity to see instability anywhere as an existential threat at home, a dwindling commitment to resourcing defence and security adequately, and a tendency to mistake the bad things that we see happening for the worst things that could possibly happen. Now that great power competition is returning to the international system, by contrast, these failings are in urgent need of correction – and many of the wider assumptions that have dominated UK thinking about post-Cold War international politics correspondingly require revisiting.

2. The evidence submission proceeds as follows. First, it describes the evolving strategic context at the global level, explaining why the ongoing rise of the BRICs and the associated return of great power competition is likely to make the international system more conflict-prone, and why such conflict is so dangerous. Second, it discusses how this global outlook is likely to impact security conditions in the UK's home region, Western Europe. Third, it discusses what this should mean for UK national security strategy out to 2035 in terms of broad principles. Fourth, it moves to more specific national security policy recommendations of the kind that may practically inform the 2015 SDSR, and in doing so touches on the JCNSS's other questions regarding alliances, risks, our world role, and how the NSS should impact national security spending choices. Fifth, it discusses key caveats and risks to the outlook, before concluding. Underpinning the argument throughout is the relative-value calculation between likelihood of conflict and costs of potential conflict that ought to lie at the heart of grand strategy. As such, while further UK involvement in small-scale stabilisation missions and counter-terrorist operations against weak or dysfunctional states may indeed remain more *likely* than major-power conflict in the next two decades, the threat posed by minor powers and non-state actors with only limited arsenals should nonetheless be a lower strategic priority than hedging against the no-longer-inconceivable dangers of major-power coercion, crisis escalation, or even outright aggression.

### **The Global Strategic Context**

3. **New great powers are rising.** The starting premise for this evidence submission is that multipolarity – a situation of more than one great power – is returning to the international system at the global level, following two post-Cold War decades of US 'unipolarity', in which American economic and associated military preponderance was so vast as to render all other major powers essentially peripheral to the conduct of international politics.<sup>1</sup> The economic rise of the BRICs is returning the world to a situation whereby, while the US may not yet face any genuine military peers, its freedom of action in key regions of the world is once again meaningfully constrained by local great powers with the wherewithal to balance US capabilities. China, moreover, has overtaken the United

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<sup>1</sup> Blagden (2015, forthcoming).

States as the world's largest economy (in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms) – and may perhaps eventually become its most capable military power too, although closing the military-technological advancement gap could prove close-to-impossible. The relative rise of the BRICs is a consequence of the catch-up convergence growth produced by post-Cold War economic globalization: a process driven from the outset, ironically, by the Western powers that are now being disempowered by it. In addition to the 'top-level' US-China dynamic, furthermore, similar relative power shifts are occurring between key major powers in important regions: between Japan and China in East Asia, for example, and – with caveats – between Germany, France, and Britain (on the one hand) and Russia (on the other) in Europe. Important regional powers are also emerging, such as Turkey and Indonesia, which while not likely to become powerful enough to project power beyond their own regions, will nevertheless have the capability to hinder external major powers' operations in their immediate vicinity.<sup>2</sup>

4. **The rise of new great powers tends to cause conflict.** Such dynamics of major power rise and decline produce conflict incentives, which often result in interstate competition and even war.<sup>3</sup> Multipolarity tends to be less stable than unipolarity: if one great power possesses a sufficient preponderance of capabilities, they can pacify all other potential interstate military rivalries by threatening to defeat one side – or even both – should they launch aggression. Even bipolarity – a situation of two great powers – is more stable than multipolarity, since each knows that they (and only they) can deter the other. Multipolarity, by contrast, introduces uncertainty about which state – if any – will contain an aggressor: each major power has incentives to 'pass the buck' (shift the costs of containment) onto a third party rather than bear such costs themselves; potential aggressors know this, and can exploit such division. In addition to such systemic instability risks under multipolarity, dynamics of rise and decline can cause hostility within particular international relationships. A declining power has incentives to contain and retard the rise of a potential rival while it still has the ability to do so, before its relative advantage disappears. A rising power, meanwhile, has incentives to weaken and ideally supplant the declining power as soon as possible, not least to dilute or remove the threat that the declining power poses to the riser (because of its own incentive structure). This interaction can produce what international relations analysts term a 'security dilemma': a situation whereby two states may each only want to be safe, but since the characteristics of each side (both their relative power trajectories, and their associated military choices) appear threatening to the other, they end-up in an escalatory spiral of competition and – if they cannot break the cycle – eventual war. Thus, while it is usually assumed that economic globalization and interdependence is a force for peace, where it produces relative power shifts – as it usually does, by enabling some countries to grow faster than others – it can actually be an underlying cause of war.

5. Such abstract theorisation can sound detached from real-world international politics, but it helps to explain many of the major strategic rivalries and associated wars of modern history. A full review of cases is naturally beyond the scope of this evidence submission, but an obvious comparison exists between the combination of multipolarity and rise/decline

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<sup>2</sup> For relevant projections, see Johansson et al. (2012), O'Neill and Stupnytska (2009), UK Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (2014), US National Intelligence Council (2008), Alexander, Cooper, and Snowdon (2010), and McWilliams, Davis, and Corge (2013).

<sup>3</sup> Blagden (2015, forthcoming).

dynamics in the run-up to both 1914 and 1939, and the hostile peace of the (bipolar) Cold War.

6. **Power shifts need not necessarily result in conflict – but peace-inducing intervening factors cannot be relied upon.** The presence of conflict incentives does not necessarily result in war, of course. The power transition of economic size and associated naval pre-eminence between Britain and America in the early twentieth century occurred largely without incident. The precipitous decline of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s similarly occurred without major war. Yet in such cases, contingent and contextual factors intervened. The transition of naval dominance between Britain and America occurred largely within the context of a major war that saw the two pitted against a common enemy, which – thanks to a combination of geographical proximity and manifestly aggressive intentions – was a much more pressing security threat to declining Britain than a geographically remote, hitherto isolationist rising power across the Atlantic. The military decline of the Soviet Union, meanwhile, became visible only once its economy was already broken; given that it was already a weaker power than the United States by the time its decline accelerated, and in the presence of a survivable US nuclear arsenal capable of retaliating against (and thus nullifying) the one area of military equality that the USSR still possessed, Moscow lacked military options to shore-up its declining position, even if it had wanted to.

7. Unfortunately, therefore, the world cannot today rely on such contingent and contextual factors intervening to render contemporary relative power shifts so peaceful. The 2010 NSS's hope that great power competition can be constrained by multilateral institutions is similarly misplaced: states with the capability to do so have never reliably subordinated themselves to such institutions when their vital interests are at stake (which is precisely why the endurance of the UN Security Council required the creation of veto-wielding permanent membership for the states with the wherewithal to otherwise ignore its edicts). The rest of this evidence submission therefore proceeds with the following global strategic context in mind. First, the major Western powers, namely the United States, Japan, Germany, France, and – crucially for us – Britain are getting weaker vis-à-vis China, India, Brazil, and Russia. Second, this process is likely to continue – albeit with risks to this outlook, and with key caveats subsequently discussed – over the next two decades. Third, this process of relative rise and decline carries an elevated risk of major power competition, conflict, and possibly even war. Interestingly, while the last NSS – like the previous year's IPPR Commission on the future of UK national security – recognised that multipolarity is returning to the international system, the concern was primarily for the waning and multilateralisation of UK political influence that this would bring, rather than the conflict incentives that such a relative power shift creates.<sup>4</sup>

8. **The risk of major power war dwarfs all other security threats.** The London bombings of 7 July 2005 killed 52, excluding the attackers themselves. The 2013 killing of Fusilier Lee Rigby – while shocking, brutal, and tragic – was the murder of one individual. Cyber attacks – another pressing contemporary concern – have, thus far, killed no-one. World War II, by contrast, killed around 451,000 Brits (military personnel and civilians) –

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<sup>4</sup> HM Government (2010), p. 15, and IPPR (2009), pp. 30-31.

making it significantly *less* lethal for British citizens than its 1914-18 predecessor. Despite never developing into outright great power war in Europe, the Cold War – the last time that the UK was engaged in military confrontation with another major power – could have left Britain a smoking, radiating ruin if one of its multiple crises had escalated beyond the point that they actually did, and included lower-level ‘proxy’ wars that (in the case of Korea) still managed to kill more than a million on all sides. Despite waves of defence cuts, moreover, the major powers’ underlying destructive capability has not declined since 1945 or 1989: if a modern industrial state ever again unleashes its military potential against another, the dangers posed by terrorism, (weak) ‘rogue’ states, and various other post-Cold War forms of instability and criminality will be rendered statistically insignificant. In short, the fact that major power competition is returning to the international system, and that military crises between such capable states is even slightly more likely, should condition how we evaluate and rank all other national security concerns – and the 2015 NSS should recognise this.

9. **Britain is in relative decline globally – but not within Europe.** Before proceeding to discuss the European security implications of this return of multipolar competition, one important qualification is due to the general picture of Western decline and BRIC rise. Namely, while Western Europe *in general* may be in relative economic and associated military decline vis-à-vis non-European powers, the United Kingdom specifically is likely to be a *rising* power *within* Western Europe. Thanks largely to favourable demographics – a combination of immigration and the resident population’s replacement ratio – in addition to certain underlying economic strengths, such as world-class universities, associated technological development, and a globally sought-after professional services sector, the UK is often forecast to become the largest economy in Western Europe, perhaps overtaking Germany somewhere around 2030-40.<sup>5</sup> When coupled to our already-region-leading military expertise and technological advancement, such relative economic growth provides grounds for guarded optimism about Britain’s strategic position. Such an outlook, if it comes to pass, will confer certain national security benefits on the UK – but it also suggests that there could be certain Western European security requirements that only Britain may be in a position to provide.

### **European Security Implications of Global Multipolarity**

10. The previous section discussed key ongoing changes in the structure of the international system that will condition the future global security environment. This section now turns to discussion of how this global outlook will impact the security environment in Britain’s home region. In particular, while there are an array of normative, institutional, and strategic factors that point towards continuing peaceful and cooperative relations *between* Western European states, this is unlikely to wholly insulate these states – Britain included – from the negative security consequences of the return of multipolarity in the wider world. Below, five likely consequences of the return of global multipolarity for European – and specifically British – security are discussed.<sup>6</sup>

11. **Russia: expanding capabilities and hostile intentions.** First, while most of the rising major powers in the world today lie outside Europe, one of them – Russia – is of critical

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<sup>5</sup> O'Neill and Stupnytska (2009), and McWilliams, Davis, and Corge (2013).

<sup>6</sup> Blagden (2015, forthcoming).



importance to European security. Of course, Russia is only a 'rising' or 'resurgent' power taken against its post-Soviet nadir of the 1990s; viewed against the 1980s and previously, Russia is and will remain severely diminished. Indeed, it is not a comparable state to the other BRICs, in that it is not a 'new' great power, and far from experiencing its first boom of industrialisation, its industrial recovery from Soviet collapse has been stilted by its economic reliance on hydrocarbon exports, demographic decline, and – most recently – US and EU sanctions.

12. Nonetheless, the era of post-Cold War globalization-driven BRIC convergence growth – and the hydrocarbon demand that it created – allowed Russia to launch a \$140 billion rearmament and military modernisation programme in 2009, which bore fruit during 2014's annexation of Crimea and subsequent large-scale military incursions into the rest of Ukraine. The Ukraine invasion is only the latest manifestation of Russian military assertiveness and outright aggression in Europe, moreover: the 2008 invasion of Georgia, 2007 and 2012 cyber attacks on Estonia and Finland, 2009 military exercises that simulated an invasion of the Baltic states and nuclear strike on Warsaw, 2013 simulated bombing runs on Stockholm, repeated violation of NATO and EU states' airspace and territorial waters, and repeated confrontational interactions with NATO forces (for example, close-range overflight of warships while locking them with fire-control radar) are all indicative. Indeed, 2014 has been the most militarily confrontational year of Russia's post-Soviet history.<sup>7</sup> Where Western governments were taken by surprise by the Ukraine intervention, therefore, it was only because they had embraced the idea that international economic engagement would pacify Moscow, whereas such engagement has instead simply made Russia more powerful. Moscow's leveraging of nationalism for political legitimisation also creates the risk of domestic pressures for further bellicosity – a risk that could be exacerbated by a shortage of major allies, internal challenges (weak demographics, stalled democratization, vulnerability to oil price shocks, sanctions-induced capital flight, and mounting inequality amongst them), and two post-Cold War decades of perceived encroachment on its immediate peripheral region by Western states and institutions. The Russian decision to test an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) while the Ukraine crisis was in its early days provided a chilling reminder of the stakes involved. To be sure, Moscow may now avail itself of innovative tactical techniques – coercive cyber attacks accompanied by the handing out of passports to Russian 'nationals', for example, thus providing a pretext for funnelling arms and covert military support to oppressed 'freedom fighters' – but it is important to recognise that these stages only represent low-level steps on the escalatory ladder towards direct invasion: a ladder that was ascended in both 2008 and 2014. Equally important to recognise is that this escalatory ladder is still topped by the threat of strategic nuclear use against those who may seek to oppose Russian aggression.

13. Note that none of this is listed to accuse Russia of necessarily being 'evil', or bent on expansionary conquest – although neither can these possibilities be ruled out. On the contrary, a country of its size, history, and shortage of major allies is likely to see rearmament and further efforts to weaken both NATO aspirants and actual NATO members on its periphery as simply prudent, now that it possesses the rejuvenated economic and military resources to do so. However, since no state can ever know for sure what another

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<sup>7</sup> Frear, Kulesa, and Kearns (2014).

will do with its military-industrial wherewithal, it makes sense for us to pay most attention to potentially-hostile near neighbours' capabilities. Should Russia once again benefit from catch-up convergence growth towards Western European development levels, moreover – as seems possible, unless a combination of relatively weak global hydrocarbon prices and current US and EU sanctions are maintained indefinitely – it may still emerge as Europe's principal major power in terms of military-industrial potential. Back in 2011, for example, Goldman Sachs projected that Russian GDP will surpass French GDP in 2024, UK GDP in 2027, and German GDP in 2029.<sup>8</sup> By 2050, they expected the Russian economy to be half as big again as Germany's. Even despite the recent stalling of Russian growth, it is worth noting that a Russia with GDP per capita approaching even the Czech Republic's would once again lead in terms of European military-industrial potential, albeit perhaps not military-technological sophistication or professionalism.

14. In short, the key manifestation of the rise of the BRICs in the European security context has been the resurgence of Russia to the point where it possesses the economic and associated military resources, as well as the incentives, to once again pose a direct threat of military coercion and even territorial conquest in Central and Eastern Europe. The risk that Russia could attempt something similar to what it has achieved in Ukraine on the territory of a NATO member – most plausibly, one or more of the Baltic states – is therefore small but non-negligible, as is the risk of a confrontational encounter between Russian and NATO forces resulting in shots being exchanged and subsequent escalation. The risks of large-scale conventional aggression against Central and Eastern European states more broadly are smaller still, but cannot be wholly dismissed – particularly within the context of a wider NATO-Russia crisis that might start over other issues. By contrast, further Russian attempts at militarised coercion of Western European states, including the UK, are highly likely: cyber attacks, intentionally provocative military exercises and force-on-force interactions, violations of territorial waters and airspace, ballistic missile movements and testing, Russian sponsorship of third-party enemies, and even limited conventional attacks are all possibilities. Crucially, however, none of this need necessarily represent a major challenge for UK national strategy, were it not for the second likely consequence the return of multipolarity at the global level: a decreased US focus on European security.

15. **The US 'pivot' to Asia.** While Russia may have recovered from the economic, political, and military collapse of the 1990s, it is unlikely to ever again be a peer-competitor of the United States. As such, if the resurgence of Russia was the only notable power shift going on in the world, it would not necessarily require any change in British national security priorities: the UK could continue to focus on humanitarian intervention, out-of-region counter-terrorism, and stabilisation missions of the kind that have characterised its post-Cold War national strategy, while relying on overwhelming US preponderance to address hostile major-power threats.

16. Unfortunately, however, pacifying Europe is no longer the United States' principal strategic concern. During the Cold War, the US commitment to European defence was unshakeable largely as a result of the continent's position as the centre of (non-US) industrial production; had the Soviet Union come to dominate Western Europe, the balance

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<sup>8</sup> O'Neill and Stupnytska (2009), and Wilson, Burgi, and Carlson (2011).

of power would have shifted decisively against the United States. Today, by contrast, US strategy is focused on Asia, as it seeks to balance against the rise of the most powerful peer-competitor that it has faced since its own rise to global military pre-eminence – and if China's rise continues, as is likely, then this Asian focus of US strategy and associated military resources will only increase. That being the case, the United States will likely prove increasingly unwilling – *and eventually unable* – to shoulder Western Europe's defence burden. Signs of this already abound, in terms of total levels of US force withdrawals from Europe, certain areas of ongoing commitment – such as the deployment of ballistic missile defence-equipped destroyers to Spain – notwithstanding.

17. Such an assessment is not to suggest that Britain's long-standing alliances are suddenly set to fracture. But it does suggest that the burden of supplying European security – including the burden of balancing against a potentially hostile Russia – will fall increasingly on those who consume it. Given Britain's combination of a relatively positive economic outlook (by European standards) and already region-leading military expertise and technological sophistication, this points to a future with a distinctly 'back to the future' twist, in which the UK is the foremost major power in a Western European balancing coalition seeking to pacify the region in general – and to deter aggression to the east in particular.

18. **International military crises.** A further likely consequence of the return of great power competition will be an elevated risk of international military crises with the potential to embroil Britain – either inadvertently, or because our vital interests are directly affected. As noted earlier, under unipolarity, militarised interstate disputes between other major powers can be pacified by the leading great power's uncontested ability to contain, or if necessary defeat, one or both parties to a conflict. Under multipolarity, however, this ceases to be the case. Moreover, as noted above, dynamics of rise and decline produce conflict incentives and tensions – tensions that can be exacerbated by factors such as resource scarcity (energy, water, raw materials, and so forth), since access to such resources or the lack thereof can accelerate relative power shifts.

19. Laundry-listing how or where such crises may unfold is an exercise fraught with uncertainty, and requiring of space far beyond what is available here. The key point, rather, is that in a world of general great power tension, the likelihood of serious militarised crises will increase. The European periphery has obvious potential, given the likely trajectory of the NATO-Russian relationship discussed above. Likewise, the Middle East will likely remain a focal point of security competition and an arena of conflict with the potential to embroil Britain, given its proximity to the European periphery, its economic importance (especially as a source of hydrocarbons for Europe, China, India, and Japan), Syria and Iraq's on-going civil wars, the strength of regional revolutionary movements such as 'Islamic State' of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and the presence of several militarily-capable regional powers with divergent interests, such as Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and post-revolutionary Egypt. That said, if the UK can reduce its economic dependence on Middle Eastern hydrocarbons – through alternative finds around the Falklands, say, or via fracking, as the United States has done – we will be in more of a position to leave the region to its own internal conflicts without feeling the same compulsion to intervene directly ourselves.

20. There is also the risk of involvement in military crises further afield, particularly where key commercial or strategic interests are at stake. For example, threats to UK interests in the South Atlantic will increase if Argentina ever manages to run sufficiently disciplined macroeconomic policy to experience sustained convergence growth and the military modernisation that this would facilitate, especially if the seabed around the Falkland Islands contains large-scale mineral deposits. Key flashpoints also exist in East Asia (China versus the US and Japan) and South Asia (India versus China and or Pakistan): but, notwithstanding the threat such crises might pose to UK imports and supply routes, these lack the geopolitical salience to Britain to merit concerted UK involvement.

21. **Vulnerable SLOCs.** Following closely from the previous point, a key mechanism by which such international military crises could embroil and threaten the UK is via the threat that such crises would pose to European sea lines of communication (SLOCs) and associated critical supply chains (for food, energy, raw materials inputs, and so forth). European energy supplies rely heavily on the Middle East and Russia – both potential sources of diplomatic and strategic tension, as discussed above – although many other European states' exposure is worse than Britain's. The Indian Ocean, Persian and Arabian Gulfs, Eastern Mediterranean, Suez region, and the Straits of Hormuz, Malacca, and even Gibraltar, meanwhile, are all crucial to British seagoing commerce – and thus to our overall economic viability – as well as potential arenas of maritime great power contestation. Yet Britain and other European states' maritime capability to provide independent (non-US) influence over such SLOCs has been hollowed-out by progressive waves of naval cuts. Meanwhile, the South Atlantic will remain an important theatre for the UK as long as London sustains its current Falklands resolve, and all Western European states should take note of Russia's increasing maritime assertiveness in the Northeast Atlantic – the single most crucial SLOC for European powers, both commercially and strategically – and question whether they still have the ability to exert sea control in their home region as the United States' Asian preoccupation grows.

22. **Nuclear proliferation risks.** A final consequence of the return of major power competition will be the improbability of meaningful steps towards multilateral nuclear disarmament – and, quite possibly, the opposite. Multipolar great power competition will make many states feel vulnerable, and the best deterrent against coercion by the conventionally-strong is a nuclear arsenal. Likewise, in such a world, states are more likely to feel that they require a potent means of coercion to promote their interests. That being the case, non-proliferation efforts will potentially continue to struggle in the coming years – and those with existing nuclear arsenals will be loath to give them up.

### **UK National Security Strategy: Core Themes**

23. As implied from the outset, many of the characteristics of UK national security policy that are often assumed to be the 'norm' of post-Cold War international politics have, in fact, been highly contingent on a structural feature of the international system: namely, the unrivalled – and historically unprecedented – military and economic preponderance of the United States. Humanitarian intervention, protracted counter-terrorist operations that subsequently became counter-insurgency (COIN) campaigns, and transformative attempts at stabilisation and state-building have all been a product of possessing the military,

diplomatic, and intelligence ‘spare capacity’ to prosecute such endeavours. Such ‘spare capacity’ has itself been a consequence of UK national security policy not needing to concern itself with protecting us militarily from powerful hostile states. Under US unipolarity, and as a close ally of the ‘unipole’, we have had no need to concern ourselves with the dangers posed by other major powers – the 2010 NSS explicitly stated that we face no major state threat<sup>9</sup> – freeing us to focus on essentially second-order security concerns. Such unipolarity is now ending, however, and UK national security policy must reflect this fact – particularly in light of the challenges for UK and wider European security posed by the return of multipolar great power competition, as discussed above. Here, five core themes are outlined that should guide UK national security strategy over the next two decades. The following section will develop more concrete recommendations for specific policy areas.

**24. Prioritise based on relative danger, not just likelihood.** Starting with prioritisation, at the heart of national strategy should lie a relative value equation. Multiplying a small-but-non-negligible number (probability of major power conflict) by a massive number (the destructive potential of advanced industrial states) still produces a large number. As discussed above, moreover, the ‘small number’ in question is no longer even that small, as Russia’s 2014 behaviour demonstrates – and it is increasing, as multipolarity returns. By contrast, multiplying a somewhat-larger number (probability of further UK involvement in ‘small’ wars, focused on counter-terrorism, stabilisation, and humanitarian protection) by a small number (the destructive potential of failed states and state-less individuals with rudimentary weapons) does not necessarily produce a number that is large enough to justify being made the principal focus of national security policy.<sup>10</sup> The latter category of wars, moreover, are the kind that we can choose to forego, without risking our national survival – which is why their recent frequency should not be taken as a guide to their importance, since this is more indicative of (internal) policy choice than external threat. The former category, by contrast, are the kind that – if deterrence fails – leave states with little discretion over participation.

**25.** Outright major power war need not be imminent for it to nonetheless constitute the top-level concern of national security policy, because – given the stakes involved – anything that makes it even slightly more likely is very dangerous indeed. This leads us to another point about prioritisation: we must not confuse the bad things that we see happening for the worst things that could possibly happen. Post-Cold War US unipolarity and the associated strength of NATO deterrence made major power war pointless, since no actor could hope to gain anything from it in the face of US opposition. As a consequence, we – especially in Britain and the rest of Europe – have started to think that such major war is no longer even possible, and therefore does not merit hedging against. Instead, we see a Middle East and North Africa engulfed by civil and cross-border conflict, apparently rampant cyber crime, possible Iranian nuclear proliferation, far-away and home-grown terrorists who wish us harm, the negative consequences of climate change, and conclude that these bad things we see happening are the most dangerous things that could happen. In fact, of course, a major power confrontation and deterrence failure in Europe – or perhaps at sea in the Gulf and Indian Ocean areas – that escalated into outright war would eclipse all of these recent ‘threats’ in terms of its human and economic costs to Britain, and this is the proper

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<sup>9</sup> HM Government (2010), p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> Blagden (2009), p. 64.

context in which they much be seen. Social scientists would classify this situation as a case of hidden variable bias: major power conflict is not impossible, but it has been prevented from manifesting itself since 1989; we thus end-up measuring – and worrying about – the conflict patterns that we can *see*, rather than reflecting on what causes us to *not* see other (much worse) forms of conflict.

26. In terms of the practicalities of prioritisation, we must apply this ‘likelihood multiplied by potential costs’ equation with reference to the material resources, offensive capabilities, offensive incentives, and geographical proximity of potential foes and dangers.<sup>11</sup> The following examples elaborate this approach.

- Home-grown radical Islamist terrorists are certainly geographically proximate, residing as they do within Britain itself, but they also have very limited resources, very limited offensive capabilities, and are unlikely to have offensive incentives unless the UK is at war – or too-obviously supporting an oppressive authoritarian regime – in a Muslim country. They thus require attention, but as potential murderers that merit sustained police and security service investigation, rather than as an existential national threat.
- China may have large material resources and substantial offensive capabilities, but it is geographically distant, regionally preoccupied, and – with certain key caveats, such as cyber espionage/attacks against strategic industrial targets (e.g. BAE and Rolls-Royce’s nuclear submarine programmes) and potentially seeking to exert greater naval control of the Indian Ocean and Persian/Arabian Gulfs – lacks incentives to threaten British interests. Containing China’s rise is therefore a key concern for the US, Japan, and India in East and South Asia, but not one that Britain can or should seek to seriously impact; the UK focus should be on avoiding confrontation, while nonetheless having the capacity to safeguard key SLOCs and defend cyber targets.
- ISIL militants may represent an existential threat to certain Middle Eastern regimes, but they lacked the resources, capabilities, proximity, and incentives to threaten Britain directly – until, of course, we started bombing them. Their resources and offensive capabilities remain trivial, and such an air campaign may degrade their capabilities further, but their offensive incentives have soared and their resources may subsequently also increase (albeit not by much), as they attract more sympathisers. Some limited intervention *may* prove to have been justified, if there was a genuine risk of ISIL overrunning the region and thus jeopardising British strategic interests in the Gulf, such as uninterrupted energy exports – but such expansive regional conquest seems unlikely, and they certainly do not merit the hyperbolic rhetoric of global existential threat recently bestowed upon them, given their limited capabilities and regionally-focused interests.
- What remains of al-Qaeda and its splinter groups (AQ et al) may still have offensive intentions towards the UK, but – short of acquiring a nuclear or sophisticated biological weapon – they lack the capabilities to progress from being a law-and-order issue to an existential threat. Prioritisation therefore points not towards seeking to destroy AQ et al via unending global war, which instead gives more people reason to terrorise us, but rather towards avoiding anything – such as destabilising Pakistan by

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<sup>11</sup> Walt (1990).

infringing its sovereignty via drone strikes – that might make their acquisition of nuclear weapons more likely.

- Russia, by contrast, possesses the material resources, offensive capabilities (unconventional – such as cyber attackers and tame ‘rebels’ – as well as conventional and nuclear), offensive incentives (rolling back and weakening perceived NATO encirclement), and geographical proximity to threaten Britain and our regional allies directly and seriously. Given this combination, in relative-value terms, it merits higher prioritisation than the other possible threats listed here.

27. Obviously, these are all instances of contemporary security challenges, whereas the 2015 NSS seeks to look out to 2035. The point of listing these instances, therefore, is not to document all security threats that the UK could conceivably face in the next two decades – although the negative security consequences of the rise of new great powers is likely to remain an enduring feature – but rather to illustrate the approach to prioritisation that such a world will require. Of course, no prioritisation would be required if Britain possessed unlimited national security resources. Yet since such resources are finite – and likely to remain painfully so for the foreseeable future<sup>12</sup> – such danger-over-likelihood prioritisation becomes necessary when contemplating which national security missions to invest in.

28. **Be circumspect about causal claims: threats to *global human security* are not necessarily threats to *UK national security*.** Following closely from this need for prioritisation based on relative danger – along with the examples bulleted above – the next NSS must encourage critical questioning of claims made about the foundation of UK national security. The weakness of the alleged causal link between Saddam Hussein’s Iraq and terrorist threats is an obvious egregious example from the past fifteen years. Yet similar charges can be levelled at the most recent Iraq re-intervention to counter ISIL. In 2013, the UK Government sought permission from Parliament to attack Bashar al-Assad’s Syrian regime, in the absence of any meaningful strategy – yet in 2014, the same UK Government is attacking the same forces that Assad’s army was itself fighting back in 2013, again without any clear idea of a desired end-state or connection to UK security. Both of these mutually exclusive policy positions have been justified as countering the threat allegedly posed to British security by instability in the Middle East, without a clear articulation of why the various warring factions – all of which are militarily weak, regionally focussed, and preoccupied with fighting each other – would either want, or have the means, to attack the UK. If the stakes are so low that backing either side is possible without a noticeably different result, does this suggest that this is not in fact a conflict that merits the deployment – and depletion – of scarce British military capacity? Relatedly, there is currently great media and political attention on the threat posed by British jihadis returning from Syria’s civil war: yet if that was genuinely the existential threat that it is billed as, why are we still calling for the fall of the local forces – Assad’s – most likely to kill such ill-prepared raw recruits on their arrival from Britain, before they have a chance to gain combat skills, and instead waging war against them indirectly ourselves, further fuelling radical Islamists’ grievances with UK policy?

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<sup>12</sup> Chalmers (2014).

29. Moving beyond the current Syria/Iraq/ISIL context to other examples, if the UK has an interest in discouraging the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) – as it surely does, because only via the acquisition of WMD can terrorists go from being a law-and-order issue to an existential threat – why did we attack a state (Libya) and thus effectively subject its leader to a brutal execution, when we had previously had great success in persuading that same state to dismantle its WMD programme? If climate change-induced resource shortages represent a future source of global instability – as they may – how would this instability, which will be felt most acutely in impoverished states outside Europe, actually manifest itself as a security threat to Britain? If cyberspace represents a potential medium of attack on Britain’s critical national infrastructure – as it could well – who are likely to be the actors with the resources to utilise that medium to maximum effect? After all, flooding in Bangladesh represents a humanitarian tragedy, and the mass theft of credit-card details represents a crime with many victims – but neither empty wells and penniless thirsty people, nor the internet and its numerous charlatans, have any grievance with Britain or Britons *in themselves*. Put simply, threats to *global human security* are not necessarily threats to *UK national security*: and, while mitigating the former is a worthy humanitarian goal, safeguarding the latter is the highest purpose of the British state.

30. The point of these questions, then, is simply to illustrate that observing that there are sources of instability in the world – civil war and state failure in the Middle East, or the suppression of demands for greater suffrage, or climate change, or limited authority and difficulties with attribution in cyberspace<sup>13</sup> – does not (a) constitute a causal claim for how these humanitarian problems actually come to manifest themselves as a security threat to *Britain*, or (b) make a case for their relative importance. Making a case that struggles for control of resources will lead to increased naval competition in the Indian Ocean and associated threats to critical UK SLOCs, or that cyberspace is most dangerous when it is utilised by powerful, well-resourced, hostile states to coerce NATO members or steal submarine reactor designs, by contrast, makes clear the causal link actually being claimed – but it also makes these security challenges seem much less ‘new’ and much more ‘traditional’ in their mode of manifestation, and in how UK strategy can respond.

31. **Do not mistake international activism for national security.** The 2010 NSS asserted from the outset that Britain cannot have a national security strategy without an assessment of our role in the world.<sup>14</sup> Yet while role is certainly an interest of states, it is not coterminous with security: it is possible to have an elevated international role and be relatively insecure, just as it is possible to have a lower-profile international role while being highly secure. Conflating status and security is a recurring mistake in debates over UK strategy: there may be good reasons to seek a ‘special’, militarily-active social role in the world, and such activism *may* contribute to security, but the link is not necessary. Indeed, where such activism creates enemies or generates hostility, it can actually detract from UK security.

32. This conflation is a key driver of the UK’s commitment to expeditionary military operations, even where – as discussed above – the causal link to national security is poorly articulated or wholly absent. As will be discussed below, in an era of major power

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<sup>13</sup> UK Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (2014).

<sup>14</sup> HM Government (2010), p. 4.



competition, cautious stewardship and conservation of strength is the key to retaining the wherewithal to deter – and, if necessary, counter – aggression from similarly-capable states. Yet post-Cold War UK defence and foreign policy has been united around an idea that activism equates to greatness – and the further military capabilities are reduced, the more desperately this notion is pushed. Contemporary China is no less of a major power because of a lack of overseas military interventions; on the contrary, eschewing such missions has allowed it to focus on the capability set most relevant for its national security, namely denying the US military access to its littoral region. During the latter half of the Cold War, Britain was a much ‘greater’ power than it is today, yet – with the exception of a long-range expeditionary deployment in 1982, to repel an invasion of sovereign territory – that greatness owed to carefully conserving the country’s military strength, rather than over-using it. The post-Cold War UK has been doing the opposite of what Theodore Roosevelt counselled: speaking loudly, while carrying an increasingly inadequate stick.

33. Note that calling for reduced international military activism is neither a call for *no* military activism nor a call to give up on remaining a major power. On the contrary, it calls for international activism in cases that meet the prioritisation criteria discussed above, in the hope that – by eschewing activism where such prioritisation criteria are *not* met – Britain will actually be able to prevail in the cases where it matters most. Similarly, it draws a distinction between *being* a major power – as measured by a state’s ability to secure itself against its greatest potential dangers, other major powers – and pursuing major power *status* – as measured by a state’s activist image of itself in the world. This may be thought of as a trade-off between quality of intervention and quantity of intervention.

34. **Deter, contain, preserve strength.** Following directly from the previous point, preparing for the return of great power competition – and particularly for standing as the principal Western European military power seeking to balance a potentially hostile Russia – will necessitate a focus on deterrence, containment, and the preservation of military strength. Prioritising the danger posed by potentially hostile major powers will necessitate a de-prioritisation of ambitious attempts at transformative state-building and ‘upstream’ stabilisation of conflict in cases where the actors involved are only weak states or non-state actors with limited capabilities for threatening the UK, in order to avoid unnecessary, capability-sapping military embroilments. The post-2001 Afghan and Iraq campaigns have succeeded in costing hundreds of British service lives and tens of billions of pounds,<sup>15</sup> while providing the UK with more enemies, overstretched armed forces, and a land-centric military that is configured primarily for COIN, direct intervention, and state-building, to the detriment of other military tasks. Avoiding further such strength depletion on low-priority military tasks, and recognised the limits to armed social transformation, will therefore be a key requirement for confronting and surviving in a competitive, conflictual, multipolar future.

35. The natural corollary to a less activist, less militarily interventionist approach to solving the world’s problems will be a greater reliance on the deterrence of potential enemies and the containment of emerging threats. Deterrence can occur through the threat of punishment (retaliation for damage already suffered) or by denial (preventing an

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<sup>15</sup> The two campaigns between them have killed 632 UK service personnel, while on the financial front, the bill for the Afghan campaign alone will have topped £40 billion by 2020: Ledwidge (2013), p. 218.

opponent from achieving their aims). Similarly, it can be counter-value (directed at things that an opponent values, such as their economic prosperity or political authority) or counter-force (directed at an opponent's own offensive and defensive capabilities). All such approaches require retention of sufficient capability and resolve to make deterrence credible – such capability can include conventional forces, 'unconventional' forces (cyber attacks, economic sanctions, and so forth) and, if the ability to deter even the most devastating of attacks is to be achieved, nuclear forces – so they are not cheap. Yet all are also far less costly – in money and lives – than major power war. Deterrence, coupled to limited military action if deterrence fails, is meanwhile a necessary component of containment: where there is a potential aggressor with both the conflict incentives and the capability to be dangerous, preserving some balance between accommodating their vital interests – which may necessitate abandoning our transformative ambitions for their total compliance – and safeguarding our own vital interests is likely to be the lowest cost, least dangerous approach to achieving strategic stability.

36. **Preserve balanced capabilities – even if that looks inefficient right now.** In the face of ever greater cuts to UK military, diplomatic, and (to a lesser extent) intelligence capabilities, there is a natural temptation to specialise in line with particular areas of expertise, particular areas of technological superiority, or particular areas of recent demand. Military examples include calls for the British Army to completely abandon armour and artillery in order to focus on special forces and light infantry units, for the Royal Navy to abandon high-end sea control capabilities in order to focus on amphibious power projection, and for the Royal Air Force (RAF) to abandon air-to-air combat and long-range strike capabilities in order to focus on tactical lift and close support missions. The alternative – preserving tiny pockets of everything from what was once a much bigger overall military force – can appear to risk inefficiency and ineffectiveness in all areas, rather than just the abandonment of some.

37. Such calls are misguided, however. Indeed, the 2009 IPPR Commission on National Security's argument that, since there will be more major powers in the world we should abandon major war-fighting capability, was a particularly striking example of this sort of contradictory reasoning.<sup>16</sup> In keeping with the themes that have run throughout this evidence submission, the fact that recent UK military operations have focused on counter-terrorism, COIN, and stabilisation does not mean that they will be the most important kind of operations in future – and neither does the fact that such operations have recently taken place, while more conventional state-on-state warfare has been less of a concern, tell us anything about the more serious conflict that high-end combat forces deter (and which therefore cannot be observed). Indeed, RAF fighters have clearly had one of their most active post-Cold War years of air-to-air interdiction of Russian forces in 2014,<sup>17</sup> the Navy is being forced to once again devote significant attention to detecting and tracking major Russian units in the Northeast Atlantic, and – at the time of writing – the Army is concluding a large-scale armoured exercise in Poland aimed at reassuring our Eastern European NATO allies. These are all developments that would have been inconceivable to many during the COIN-centric first decade of this millennium – and they are developments that, while certainly stretching the services, all involve capabilities that are at least still in Britain's

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<sup>16</sup> IPPR (2009), pp. 30-31.

<sup>17</sup> Frear, Kulesa, and Kearns (2014).

possession, which would not be the case if the MOD had too-enthusiastically embraced specialisation according to the ‘new’ visions of future conflict that were prevalent before the last NSS and SDSR processes. By contrast, by retaining a balanced spectrum of military capabilities, we retain the expertise and associated equipment necessary to adapt to – and, if necessary, scale-up to fight – evolving future threats that multipolarity might bring.<sup>18</sup>

### **UK National Security Strategy: Specific Policy Implications**

40. The previous section discussed five core principles of UK national security strategy that follow from a recognition that major power competition with the potential to result in conflict is returning to the international system. This section turns to an exploration of how these core principles can inform specific policy choices, as manifested via the 2015 SDSR and subsequent SDSRs, during the period impacted by the 2015 NSS.

41. **Resource security and defence properly.** It is perhaps a fool’s hope to call for additional resources for national security, given the fiscal climate that has endured since the 2008 financial crisis and which will surely continue in the next Parliament. Nonetheless, given the fact that there is once again a hostile major power threat in Europe, coupled to other dangers in the wider world and a waning US commitment to European defence, there must come a time when we question the assumption that the direction of travel for defence spending as a proportion of GDP in particular – intelligence, aid, and to a lesser extent diplomatic spending having held up better since the start of the millennium – will always be downwards, and that the armed forces will always be capable of doing more with less. Indeed, the services’ ‘can-do’ attitude to papering over cracks is the principal reason that emerging capability gaps have not thus been felt as painfully as they might.

42. **Nuclear deterrence remains pivotal.** The ultimate deterrent of aggression by the conventionally strong and of coercion by the nuclear armed is a secure second-strike nuclear arsenal. The outlook for the Baltic States today if NATO were not a nuclear alliance, for example, would be bleak indeed. Given a combination of renewed major power aggression in Europe by a nuclear-armed Russia, and a waning US commitment to European defence, therefore, it is essential that the UK retains a survivable retaliatory strategic nuclear capability into the future – which, in practice, means pressing ahead with the planned four-boat replacement *Successor* SSBN class.<sup>19</sup> The Government can continue to pay lip service to the goal of global nuclear disarmament if that is necessary politically: but since it is never going to happen, and since it would dangerously elevate conventional war risks if it did, we must plan for a nuclear future.

43. **Pursue a grand strategy of ‘offshore balancing’.** As implied by the calls above to prioritise threats based on relative danger and preserve strength where possible, the UK should seek to act as what strategic theorists call an offshore balancer: an over-the-horizon sea and air controller that seeks to utilise local allies wherever possible, intervening ashore itself only where there is a hostile state powerful enough to pose a danger of conquest in a region vital to UK interests and where local allies lack the strength to address the threat

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<sup>18</sup> Blagden (2009), p. 64.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Ship submersible ballistic nuclear’: that is, nuclear-armed ballistic missile-carrying nuclear-powered submarines. Blagden (2013).

themselves. ISIL *might* constitute such a threat, if local allies were incapable of containing them: although the fact that they have not even managed to fully defeat such fragile states as Iraq and Syria, let alone much more capable regional powers, such as Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Israel suggests that they may fall some way short of this bar. Russia, by contrast, almost certainly constitutes a threat that local allies are incapable of handling independently, hence the necessity of robust guarantees and associated force commitments to the Baltic States and Poland. Utilising base networks, naval platforms, and air assets, offshore balancers are well-placed to defend their SLOCs, deny mobility to their enemies, and conduct stand-off strikes from the sea in support of local allies where needed, but without the crippling attenuated costs and enmities produced by direct ground intervention. They are therefore better able to pick only essential fights, and to otherwise conserve their capabilities. Offshore balancing does not deny the need for land forces: but they must represent the core of a capital- and firepower-intensive army that can be scaled-up for major conflict on the rare occasions that that is needed, rather than an army tailored towards frequent efforts at COIN and state-building.<sup>20</sup>

44. **Cyber threats are real but deterrable.** In keeping with the call to think carefully about the causal underpinnings of national security arguments, the current concern surrounding cyber attacks must be considered not just in terms of there being ‘bad people out there on the internet’, but rather in terms of *which* actors have the resources and incentives to use cyber attacks and espionage to maximum coercive and destructive advantage. In practice, this means that rather than thinking about cyber threats as a competing *alternative to* the dangers posed by hostile major powers, they must instead – at least in the case of the ones serious enough to count as a danger, rather than a mere irritation – be thought of primarily as a *manifestation of* the dangers posed by hostile major powers. Crucially, moreover, because the coercive aims of cyber attackers identify the interests that they are seeking to advance, there is scope for deterring such attacks in ‘traditional’ ways, via linkage to our conventional and nuclear capabilities.

45. **Rediscover our SLOCs.** As noted above, the return of great power competition in the wider world – and particularly the rise of new navies approaching the reach and capability levels of the major Western navies – is likely to result in increasing maritime competition, for example over access to scarce resources. As an import-dependent island economy, ensuring security for our SLOCs in the face of such strategic competition will necessitate a re-emphasising of naval and maritime-aerial assets. Steps to restore hull numbers and thus presence to the Royal Navy’s escort fleet should be investigated, such as the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre’s *Black Swan* sloop concept, as should the regeneration of maritime patrol and strike options for the RAF.<sup>21</sup>

46. **Prioritise regions by geopolitical relevance.** Europe will always be the region most critical for UK security, because it is where we happen to reside; the ‘global village myth’ – that instability anywhere in the world is a direct threat at home<sup>22</sup> – should be resisted. This means that retaining the ability to control and secure the Northeast Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and contributing to the defence of Continental Europe, must once again top

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<sup>20</sup> Blagden (2014).

<sup>21</sup> UK Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (2012).

<sup>22</sup> Porter (2015, forthcoming).

our national security agenda, now that Russia once again has both the capability and the intent to threaten NATO. Beyond Europe, the South Atlantic contains UK territory that faces a direct threat, and the Middle East is important for its energy supplies, so they must be our next two priorities – although the security situation in the latter is better managed by offshore balancing (discussed above) than through direct military intervention. Beyond Europe, the Middle East, and the South Atlantic, however, direct threats to our security interests – and our ability to influence such dangers as there are – both fall markedly.

47. **‘Do no harm’ on proliferation.** As noted above, a world of multipolar great power competition is unlikely to be one where optimistic visions for multilateral nuclear disarmament are fulfilled. Recent British policy choices have also made proliferation more likely: attacking Saddam Hussein’s Iraq at a time when Baghdad was belatedly complying with weapons inspectors (and, when no WMD were found, declaring that we would have invaded anyway, for different reasons) – like deposing Muammar Gaddafi’s Libyan regime after successfully persuading him to give up his WMD programme – has sent a strong signal to the likes of Iran that Western powers pose an existential danger regardless of their assurances, but also that, if a state can achieve a nuclear arsenal, then those same Western powers will have no choice but to respect and bargain with it (like North Korea’s experience). That said, UK strategy can still minimise the proliferation of nuclear dangers. Eschewing policies that pose an existential threat to Iran (and counselling the same to our allies) will give Tehran less reason to cross the threshold of turning its nuclear technical capability into an actual arsenal. Yet if Iran does cross the threshold, we must also recognise that such a situation will likely be better handled via containment and deterrence, rather than invasion, since the latter would incentivise the leadership to disperse and devolve control of the arsenal to make it more survivable (which would make acquisition of a weapon by terrorists more likely) – or even to use one or more of their weapons to display resolve, to coerce our regional allies, or to weaken our deployed regional forces. Such containment could also feature security assurances to regional allies, in order to reduce the likelihood of a regional arms race (which could again result in the loss of a nuclear weapon to terrorists, if a state such as Saudi Arabia built its own arsenal and then suffered a revolution). Similar logic was applied to Pakistan earlier in this evidence submission: it is not so much the existence of nuclear weapons that poses a danger, but rather risk of loss of control by conservative, risk-averse national leaders to the advantage of potentially more radically-minded terrorists or renegade officials, hence the suggestion that the best way to minimise the risk of nuclear terrorism is to avoid doing anything that might destabilise a nuclear-armed regime.

48. **Keep terrorism in perspective.** As stressed at the outset, even the highest-profile recent terrorist attacks on the UK have been closer to serious criminal incidents than acts of war, in terms of their casualty figures. That is not to deny that they are deeply shocking – that is the purpose of acts of terror, after all – or that future attacks could not be substantially more fatal, particularly if terrorists acquired a nuclear or sophisticated biological weapon. The UK will continue to face a terrorist threat, and at some point the best efforts of the security services will not be sufficient to thwart another significant attack. Yet the fact remains that terrorists simply do not represent an existential threat in the way that the military forces of advanced major powers do. A counter-terrorism-centric national security strategy may therefore have made sense during two decades in which major power

threats were absent from the international system, but such centrism is no longer justifiable if it begins to impinge on Britain's ability to hedge against the threat posed by hostile powerful states via the conservation of strength, the retention of balanced forces, and an offshore balancing posture. As discussed above, moreover, terrorist threats are not necessarily even made less severe – and are quite possibly made worse – by the prosecution of expeditionary counter-terrorist operations, particularly when they sprawl into transformative attempts at state-building via COIN, given the enmities and proliferation risks generated.

49. **A high bar – and a low cost-threshold – for humanitarian intervention.** As stressed throughout, the need to prepare for a return of multipolar great power competition necessitates a conservation of military resources, intelligence capacity, and diplomatic capital – all of which point towards an avoidance of unnecessary wars. The place where this applies most obviously is to humanitarian intervention: not only must we face the 'hard truth about a noble notion', in US scholar Benjamin Valentino's words – that it usually does more harm than good to those on the receiving end<sup>23</sup> – it also drains military, diplomatic, and intelligence resources on operations that do not contribute to UK national security. Pursuit of the 'responsibility to protect' may have made a nice luxury good during the two post-Cold War decades, when our armed forces were required for little else, but now that they once again need to be preserved for deterring similarly-capable potentially hostile military forces, such overuse of our under-resourced forces is no longer justifiable. This is not to say that there can never be humanitarian crises serious enough to merit a UK intervention: but there must be a clear strategy for how British military involvement will actually make the situation better (rather than just the hand-wringing 'something must be done!' impulse), and crucially, such intervention must only occur in situations where the potential costs of doing so are negligible. Thus, preventing a genocide that is being conducted with machetes, and where there are no local actors with the ability to meaningfully resist UK forces, may fit the criteria – but intervening on one side of an intractable and poorly-understood civil war will not.

50. **Question how 'climate wars' or 'resource wars' will actually threaten Britain.** As noted previously, identifying that resource shortages and climate-induced famines and droughts will likely be a cause of future human insecurity has been a valuable contribution of recent work on the future character of conflict – but it is not the same as explaining how such global insecurity constitutes a threat to UK national security. Countering climate change and global poverty constitute worthy goals of Britain and Britons: but such challenges only become a *national security* threat when they pit capable and hostile adversaries against the UK (either as a threat to *our* own vital resource supplies, or because they oppose us as threat to *their* vital resource supplies). This means that countering such dangers may actually require a much more 'traditional' strategic response than the discourse of 'new' security threats might suggest: the Royal Navy cannot prevent the dwindling of fossil fuel supplies, for example, but it can certainly counter those who might seek to secure preferential access to – or superior profits from – such dwindling supplies by closing the Straits of Hormuz.

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<sup>23</sup> Valentino (2011).

51. **Utilise alliances, but do not become ‘romantically attached’ – or surprised when they let us down.** Britain is privileged to benefit from some of the strongest alliance relationships that have ever existed, and with some of the most capable partners in the world today – including the state that remains by far the contemporary international system’s foremost military power, the United States. The US partnership is tremendously valuable, in terms of the balancing contribution that it brings to NATO, the levels of technical expertise and interoperability we share, and concrete capabilities – such as the shared Trident D5 ballistic missile stockpile, preferential sales of the Tomahawk land attack missile, tier-one involvement in the fifth-generation F-35 joint combat aircraft programme, and sharing of satellite intelligence assets – that would likely otherwise be beyond Britain’s material means, at least with current budgets. Nonetheless, we must not mistake the fact that they find us useful for affection: the United States is a separate country with vital interests that, very sensibly, Washington will not jeopardise for the sake of a foreign power, as US opposition to the 1956 Suez intervention, reticence over providing open support in 1982, and lack of interest in British counsel following 2003’s Iraq intervention all illustrate. Moreover, as noted above, our centrality to US national security strategy is waning as Washington focuses on balancing the rise of China. That said, if we subsequently assume more of an independent role as a contributor to the defence of Europe and the Middle East, we may be able to forge more of a peer relationship of equals with the United States, via the implied division of labour, than the current senior/junior partners arrangement (or the current ‘parent/child’ relationship, to be less flattering).

52. As for Europe, cooperation is of course positive: and there are some tangible examples of effectively pooled capability, such as the Anglo-Dutch Amphibious Group. It is also, as stressed throughout, the most geopolitically salient region for the UK: so it should certainly be a focus of our alliance-building efforts. Nonetheless, given the current difficulties in jointly procuring even a single medium-weight missile with France, for example – the *Sea Skua*-replacing ‘FASGW(H)/ANL’ – the more far-reaching visions for Anglo-French cooperation are as unrealistic as the visionary claims for the EU as an expeditionary military superpower that were common before the Eurozone crisis. The claim that London or Paris would deploy the principal unit of their respective navies in any one of a potentially infinite category of scenarios vital to the interests of one state but peripheral (or even inimical) to the interests of the other, in particular, is wholly incredible, which is why visions of future carrier-sharing (say) are unlikely to succeed. Indeed, it is important to remember that Britain already is Western Europe’s principal military power, and if our relative economic position within the region improves as projected, then this military advantage will likely increase: as such, we should not be too optimistic about European defence sharing, because there will simply not be many similarly-capable powers to share with; we may well thus have ‘carrying the can’ for regional security foisted upon us by circumstances.

### **Caveats and Risks to the Outlook**

53. The analysis above is premised on the assumptions that great power competition is returning to the international system as the BRICs rise and that the UK will remain a European major power with some limited extra-regional power-projection capability. However, there are clearly risks to both such outlooks.

54. In terms of external developments, the BRICs' rise – jeopardised in 2014 by an economic slowdown – could stall in a more permanent way, or even go into reverse, in which case US unipolarity would likely reassert itself. China's construction bubble and shadow banking sector could explode. Russia's economy could collapse in the face of Western sanctions, falling global oil prices, and associated capital flight and fiscal shortfalls, coming up on two decades of hydrocarbon-based growth having crowded-out other forms of more sustainable economic activity, via the associated corruption and rouble strength. India could prove unable to overcome the economic challenges of entrenched corruption, a sluggishly bureaucratic state, and poor infrastructure. Brazil, like Russia, could prove unable to move beyond a resource export-based economy. And further BRIC convergence in general may require the additional global liquidity that only full renminbi internationalisation may be able to provide – yet it is far from clear that China has the resolve to implement the reforms that that would require. If the BRICs' rise does indeed stop or reverse, then many of this evidence submission's arguments regarding the security consequences of the return of multipolarity would require revisiting. This all said, however, while a stalling of the BRICs' rise would be good for Western states' relative power position, a China or Russia facing a domestic political crisis as a consequence of their government models' inability to channel popular discontent over an economic crisis might be an even more dangerous proposition, if they resorted to nationalist belligerence to shore-up domestic control. Turning away from the BRICs to look beyond state-based threats, if it became known that terrorists had secured a nuclear weapon, then the prioritisation of state-based threats advocated here would require reappraisal, since a non-state actor would have attained state-like levels of destructive capability – although this is still not to say that the terrorist threat should represent the sole focus of security strategy, that terrorists cannot be deterred, or that state-based threats could then be justifiably neglected.

55. In terms of internal developments, the UK could pursue self-defeating policies that weaken its strategic position. First, if we vote to leave the EU, the most important barrier – British resistance – to further political union and eventual federalisation of the remaining EU states would be removed. This would at a stroke create a German-dominated superpower in the centre of Europe, the wishes of which the UK would have no choice but to comply with: having spent centuries intervening militarily in Continental Europe in order to prevent the regional dominance of any one great power that could then dictate political and economic terms Britain, leaving the EU would pave the way for just such an outcome. On the positive side, Britain would not then be the principal power seeking to balance Russian aggression – but on the down side, the UK would no longer be a meaningfully independent actor in its home region. Second, if the UK is unable to achieve a constitutional settlement vis-à-vis its constituent nations that adequately assuages Scottish nationalism and we see a re-run of 2014's referendum in another ten years, the subsequent break-up of the Union would leave Britain a diminished international actor, both strategically and symbolically. Third, if income inequality continues to rise, Britain's ability to operate as a coherent political-military actor may be fundamentally undermined; that is, if the small fraction of the population that controls the bulk of the country's wealth has divergent interests from the vast majority of the people who occupy it and may be expected to fight for it. Fourth, and in a similar vein, if government policy becomes sufficiently 'captured' by external interests, a similar inability to act as an independent, cohesive political-military actor may be a consequence; the



inadvertently photographed Cabinet Office memo of early 2014 suggesting that Britain should adopt a light-touch response to the Ukraine crisis because of the importance of Russian financial interests to the City of London was particularly disturbing in this regard. Fifth, of course, Britain could weaken itself via further ill-fated and strategically irrelevant wars in the mould of the Iraq and Afghan campaigns; while the question of a UK security rationale for taking limited aerial and naval steps to reverse ISIL's territorial gains may be a moot point, therefore, it is nonetheless crucial that the likely mission-creep of deepening ground involvement is resisted firmly – and that great reticence is showed over future such embroilments.

### **Conclusion**

56. This evidence submission has made the case that multipolar great power competition is returning to the international system, and that – given its dangers – it should represent the highest concern of the 2015 NSS. **At the very least, the danger posed by potentially hostile major states should receive more recognition that it did in the 2010 NSS.** Thinking in terms of this return of great power competition in turn provides a framework for evaluating policy choices in areas as diverse as nuclear deterrence, humanitarian intervention, cyber and climate conflict, and alliance politics, which will thus enable the NSS to effectively influence the concrete policy and spending choices of the SDSR. As such, while the world is dangerous, and while UK defence and security spending is likely to remain as constrained in 2015 as it has ever Britain's modern history, there are some useful grounds for prioritisation. Encouragingly, moreover, in terms of our longer term economic outlook, our existing military expertise and technological sophistication, and the fact that a degree of balance has thus far been retained in our armed forces, meeting this priority – while challenging – should nonetheless prove possible.

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### **About the Contributor**

David Blagden is the Adrian Research Fellow in International Politics at Darwin College, and a Research Associate with the Centre for Rising Powers, both at the University of Cambridge. From March 2015, he will be a University Lecturer in International Security and Strategy at the University of Exeter's Strategy and Security Institute. His work focuses on the economic causes and strategic consequences of the rise of new great powers, deterrence (including nuclear, cyber, and conventional), European security, and UK defence policy. His scholarly publications have appeared or are forthcoming in *International Security*, *International Affairs*, and the *RUSI Journal*, among other outlets, and his public affairs commentary has appeared in the *Guardian* and on the BBC. He is a member of the Chief of the Defence Staff's Strategic Forum and an officer in the Royal Naval Reserve, having previously worked in the Strategy Unit of the Cabinet Office on an Economic and Social Research Council-backed academic placement, and for the London-based country risk advisory firm Business Monitor International. He holds a DPhil in International Relations from University College, Oxford, an MA (Distinction) in International Relations from the University of Chicago, and a BA in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics from Pembroke College, Oxford.

**Disclaimer:** As noted in the biography above, the author is an officer in the Royal Naval Reserve, alongside his primary role as a university-based international relations scholar. He stresses, however, that this evidence submission is based on work completed in his civilian academic capacity; it has not received input from – and does not reflect the official views of – the Royal Navy or the Ministry of Defence. He is also obviously unable to comment on the specifics of Royal Navy operations in an unclassified forum. These remarks should therefore be treated as taking a balanced view of national security ‘in the round’, based on the author’s scholarly assessment of contemporary threats and priorities, notwithstanding his allocation of a substantial proportion of his spare time to a reserve service commitment and an associated base level of military professional knowledge.

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30 November 2014

David L Bowen – written evidence

#### Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy

1a; What has happened to the Electricity Industry, since privatisation, has not been conducive to having a secure, efficient, and coordinated organisation. In the process we lost our manufacturing, coal, and nuclear industries.

1b: Government put in place a Regulator that was only as good as its remit. What was considered as a Utility item, was now treated as a commodity, and put in the hands of Traders.

1c: The Generators were further broken up, while the Area Distribution Boards were sold off, all now, mostly, in the hands of foreign investors. The main priority for the Companies is to be profitable, and part of the Regulators remit is to ensure this.

1d: Capital investment in new gas, wind, and solar plant, paid for by customers, was the order of the day. It was not profitable to maintain older Power Stations on standby, to maintain the CEEB's 30% Headroom capacity. This has now eroded to circa. 5%. Security of supply should have been part of some bodies remit.

1e: We have been made dependent on coal from Russia, and wood chips from America, for much of our electricity. Much of our gas is imported, and we have little storage capacity. One giant seaborne tanker carries enough gas for just two days.

1f: We are coal rich, and have exploited less than 10% of it.

1g: DECC's preoccupation with CO2 is costing us dear, making our energy costs uncompetitive, and will drive out existing, and emerging industries, to countries that have not been so single minded.

1h: I append my observations, for your information, regarding pollution of our atmosphere. DECC have refused to even consider the implications.

1i: Do we fit, so called, carbon capture, and moisture traps, to all aeroplanes? Or do we continue to blame pollution on coal, and gas, fired Power Stations.

#### Cabinet Office – written evidence

**The Government has previously promised to consult the Committee on its plans for the next National Security Strategy. Members are concerned at the short time left available for this consultation; can you tell us when this consultation will take place, and what aspects of the next NSS you expect to consult on?**

Although work is at an early stage, the in-confidence briefing on the NSRA arranged for 16 March may provide an opportunity to brief the Committee on contextual analysis being prepared by the FCO and the Home Office. It will also be an opportunity to consult the Committee on its views on the central issues which need to be addressed in a post-election National Security Strategy and SDSR.

**The Committee is aware that after the General Election there may be pressure to complete the next National Security Strategy quickly. What measures are being taken now to either gather expert opinion from outside Government, or to enable it to be gathered quickly after the Election?**

Decisions on the nature and scope of expert consultation for the next National Security Strategy will be for the next government to take. We would expect to offer the incoming government options on consultation and would welcome the Committee's views on what these might cover. Options might, for example, include whether or not to select an independent, specialist expert advisory group and/or a number of flexible, issue-dependent or sector-specific groups co-ordinated by departments; regular in-confidence consultation of expert Select Committees; engagement with multilateral and bilateral partners; and wider consultative processes such as through release of a Green Paper for consultation.

**The Committee has asked before for the names of specific experts and institutions advising the National Security Council. Could you please give us these details in relation to the meetings of the NSC in 2014?**

The National Security Council receives advice and assessments from Departments, the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre and the Joint Intelligence Committee. Departments draw directly and indirectly on work conducted in partnership with organisations outside Government,

including the private sector, think-tanks, academia and international organisations. The NSC is also exposed directly to non-governmental experts through seminars; and, as a matter of course, Ministers consult a wide range of experts in their preparations for the NSC.

For example, on conflict-prevention policy, a range of expert NGOs is invited to provide an independent view and challenge the Government's performance on a confidential basis: organisations are selected on the basis of their expertise concerning the country under discussion and their understanding of the Government's conflict prevention activity. On defence and security policy themes in the context of the 2014 NATO Summit, a National Security Experts Group consisting of representatives from think-tanks and academia provided advice to the National Security Adviser.

In addition, each risk in the National Security Risk Assessment is owned by the Department or agency best placed to coordinate evidence and expertise relating to it. These risk owners are encouraged to consult a wide-range of experts, including those external to Government where feasible given both sensitivities and security clearances. Examples include:

- the Natural Hazard Partnership, comprising a consortium of 17 public bodies;
- the Space Environment Impacts Expert Group, consisting of a number of UK scientists and engineers; and
- a virtual group of volcanic hazards experts from academia, along with the British Geological Survey and the Met Office.

**How often does the National Security Council (Officials) meeting convene? Is this tied to the NSC meeting or does it also meet at other times? The Committee would find it most useful to receive NSC(O) agendas as well as the NSC agendas.**

The Officials' group of the National Security Council (NSC(O)) meets at least weekly, to prepare the NSC the following week, and sometimes for senior level discussions on strategic policy issues, after which the Chairman submits conclusions to the Prime Minister and other members of the NSC.

NSC(O) meetings allow for strategic priorities to be set, enable closer alignment between strategic policy-making and the work of the Joint Intelligence Committee, and seek to achieve agreement on issues which do not, at that stage, require Ministerial attention. NSC(O) also allows officials to seek to resolve disputes or differences of perspective between Departments before these are put before the NSC itself.

*23 December 2014*

## Campaign Against Arms Trade – written evidence

1. The Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) in the UK is working to end the international arms trade. This has a devastating impact on human rights and security, and damages economic development. CAAT believes that large scale military procurement and arms exports only reinforce a militaristic approach to international problems.
2. CAAT is pleased that the Joint Committee is to look at the issues raised as the new National Security Strategy (NSS) is developed, inviting views from the public. As security is an issue which affects everyone, every effort should be made to make the process as open as possible with Committee hearings held in public and documents published.
3. Discussion of UK national security is handicapped by the considerable degree of homogeneity between the leaders of the three main UK political parties. Narrowly focussed, they all support the armed forces, nuclear weapons and the arms companies. This consensus is exacerbated by the media, particularly the broadcast media, which sees balance largely in party political terms. This makes it difficult to challenge the "establishment" view.
4. A further impediment to useful discussion is the conflation of "security" with "Defence". This predisposes thinking towards military responses and can pigeon-hole the subject within the Ministry of Defence and the Defence teams of political parties, even when it is being argued that security is a much broader issue than this. Any actions that the Joint Committee can take to encourage public, political and media discussion on security issues, particularly from a broader perspective, would be welcome.

### **How broadly should the NSS define national security?**

5. As was the case in 2010, the NSS should look at all kinds of threats to UK security, not only those which are military. The 2015 NSS should go further and also examine the deeper roots underlying these threats, and consider what contributes to and exacerbates them.
6. Climate change, unequal trade policies and authoritarian rule are just some examples of the causes of insecurity. The NSS should contain a full examination of them and how they feed into each other, compounding the problems.

**What should be the UK's national security priorities for the next twenty years, and how should these steer the next NSS**

7. Tackling these problems, the underlying causes of insecurity, over the next twenty years should mean a shift in focus right across Government. Human rights, tackling climate change and global development need to be consistently at the centre of policy; human needs must take priority over commercial concerns.
8. A major component to the UK's security policy should be a commitment not to make the underlying threats worse. Overseas military interventions should be removed as a policy option. The UK government's continued support for arms exports is a major factor in the general cynicism about UK foreign policy. Successive UK governments have called for universal human rights, but this has been totally undermined by their commitment to promoting arms sales.
9. The UK government has had an arms sales agency since 1966. In this time weapons have been promoted and sold to many human rights violators and countries involved in conflict. These include Pinochet's Chile, Galtieri's Argentina, Saddam's Iraq and Gaddafi's Libya and continue today with sales to repressive and authoritarian leaders such as those in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. With the arms goes a message of UK support and international credibility for oppressors.
10. Saudi Arabia is the largest customer for UK arms, giving it huge power to mute any UK criticism of its policies. Although it may say it wants democracy or to end corruption, the UK governments have continued to act as the sales department for BAE Systems and the other arms companies. If the UK wants to be seen as a power of good in the world it needs to stop prioritising arms sales. It should switch from helping despotic regimes remain in power to supporting those struggling for democracy and human rights. The consequences for improved UK security will be immense.
11. One particular cause of injustice urgently needs tackling as part of a strategy for UK and global security. Jewish people were treated appallingly for millennia in Europe. This history should not, however, mean that the state of Israel, set up in response to this, should be allowed to flout United Nations' resolutions and international law while the UK and the West do nothing. In July and August 2014, while television screens and social media showed horrific deaths and injuries and smashed infrastructure in Gaza, the UK government did not even impose an arms embargo or sever its military links with Israel. Such inaction in the face of catastrophe was inexcusable.

**Should the UK plan to maintain its global influence? Should we aim for a national consensus on the UK's future place in the world?**

12. The maintenance of UK global influence seems to have become, as illustrated by some of the discussion about Scottish independence, conflated with military might, the possession of nuclear weapons and a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. This is a negative definition of UK influence that appears steeped in the primacy of hard power. Military intervention, arms sales and armed forces collaboration by the UK can also leave many of its citizens feeling ashamed.
13. There are plenty of ways the UK could, and does, already have a positive influence, not least because the English language has become the global one. Music, theatre, scientific invention, sport and the example of the National Health Service are all illustrations of this. Another beneficial role the UK might consider is becoming a leader in the development and promotion of renewable energy and low carbon technologies.
14. It is also vital that the UK be seen to consistently encourage democratic participation and uphold the rule of law in the UK and overseas. Those who flee injustice to the UK should be treated with respect.

**How can the next NSS be made most useful in guiding decisions in Government and long-term spending decisions?**

15. The 2010 NSS identified fifteen major threats to UK security. Only two of these involved a military attack by another state on the UK and just three more had any military component at all. The others were non-military such as cyber attack and terrorism, as well as energy security and natural disasters, including flooding.
16. The allocation of resources since 2010 has not matched the identified threats. Instead, the *status quo* has prevailed, suiting the armed forces and arms companies. They have successfully argued for military spending of 2% of Gross Domestic Product, meaning that the UK has the world's 6th largest military budget without any explanation as to how such spending enhances security. Inside that budget, equipment costs have been prioritised over personnel showing the influence of arms company lobbying.
17. To tackle the underlying causes of insecurity, vested interests need to consciously be set to one side. As well as ending tax-payer support for the arms trade, UK military spending should be reduced. Resources should, for example, be shifted from developing new nuclear-armed submarines, or building and operating new aircraft carriers, towards environmental work to minimise flood risks or greater support for renewable energy development.



18. Many of those employed in the arms industry are skilled engineers, and there is a generally acknowledged shortage of these. Sectors that could benefit from these skills include renewable energy and low carbon technologies. The public funds which support the arms trade should be redirected to investment in renewable energy and low carbon technologies. Since energy security and climate change are acknowledged threats it would seem to be a win-win situation to use the skills of current arms industry workers as well as those seeking employment to address this.

September 2014

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament – written evidence

### **National Security Strategy 2010**

1. The 2010 National Security Strategy (NSS) officially classified the Trident nuclear weapons system as falling outside the top rank of security concerns faced by the UK and yet this assessment has had no impact on subsequent government policy. The 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review and the 2013 Trident Alternatives Review both failed to consider disarming Britain's nuclear weapons, even though the government accepts that 'no state currently has the combination of capability and intent needed to pose a conventional military threat to the territorial integrity of the UK'<sup>24</sup>.
2. The failure of the government to address the conclusions of the 2010 NSS in strategic policy making poses serious concerns. To overcome this gap in strategic thinking, the government should pledge to base the next Strategic Defence and Security Review on the findings of the next NSS and sequence the research, analysis and publication of these documents accordingly. It should be noted that the Liberal Democrats passed an emergency motion to include Trident in the Strategic Defence and Security Review at their annual conference in 2010. Labour agreed at their 2014 conference to include nuclear weapons as part of the next National Security Strategy. The House of Commons Defence Committee has also stated that 'NSS 2015 will need to identify which threats Trident will be expected to deter'.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> 'Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review (point 3.32)  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/62482/strategic-defence-security-review.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/62482/strategic-defence-security-review.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> 'Deterrence in the twenty-first century', House of Commons Defence Committee,  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmdfence/1066/1066.pdf>

## International Context

3. The world faces huge challenges. Hundreds of thousands of people are being displaced due to climate change and conflict. The battle for dwindling resources and displacement due to environmental changes poses the greatest security risk for the international community today. The United Nations Refugee Agency estimates there will be over 25 million climate change refugees by 2050.<sup>26</sup> The changing climate affected Britain in 2014, with the government having to announce £540 million worth of spending to deal with the homes and livelihoods ruined.<sup>27</sup>
4. States, including the United Kingdom, are also dealing with a fast evolving political landscape. Twenty five years after the end of the Cold War, characterised by two sides threatening each other with mutual destruction, we now live in a multi-polar world where many states – both nuclear-armed and nuclear-free – have complex relationships. As with much of the Western world, the UK's political and economic influence is declining, affecting its traditional relationships. The United States has declared a rebalancing of its foreign policy to concentrate more on Asia, shifting the country's geo-strategic focus from the Europe-centred Cold War past to the new realities of power across the world.
5. The increasing conflict in the Middle East poses continued problems for the region and the wider world. Britain's involvement in the 2003 Iraq war, and the war on and occupation of Afghanistan, together with a century of western economic, political and military intervention, have undoubtedly contributed to the destabilisation of the region and the rise of terrorist groups such as Islamic State and Al-Qaeda – previously non-existent in Iraq - which may pose threats on British soil as well as resulting in great dangers for the people of the Middle East.
6. The recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa is the biggest ever known, with the US Centres for Disease Control predicting there will be 1.4 million cases by late January 2015. As well as causing thousands of deaths, this outbreak is having a severe impact on already fragile healthcare systems and the wider economy in many countries.
7. There is considerable insecurity in the world at the moment, but the risk of state on state nuclear warfare is not one of the main dangers. The British government acknowledged this changing political climate in its previous National Security Strategy, published in autumn 2010. Whilst identifying the same range of twenty-first century threats just described, the NSS downgrades the risk of state on state nuclear warfare to a tier two threat. This analysis should have forced the

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<sup>26</sup> 'The State of the World's Refugees', The UN Refugee Agency, <http://www.unhcr.org/publications/24-chapter-7-displacement-climate-change-and-natural-disasters.html#more-24>

<sup>27</sup> 'UK floods 2014: government response and recovery' <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-floods-2014-government-response>

government to challenge the level of spending allocated to a Cold War nuclear weapons system.

### **Britain's Approach**

8. Instead, there is a disconnect between the government's analysis and its actual policies. Nuclear weapons were developed specifically in the Cold War context: to be able to win an actual nuclear war against a hostile, massively armed state. Despite the Cold War coming to an end, with the Soviet Union dissolving in 1991, the UK went ahead with acquiring Trident which was launched in the mid 1990s with the last submarine entering service in 2001.
9. The UK Parliament voted in 2007 to begin preparatory work on a new nuclear weapons system, to replace the current system as it wears out between 2025 and 2030. A final vote on whether to go ahead with the system is expected in 2016. This new system will cost at least £100 billion over its lifetime.
10. If the UK envisages at least another 50 years of British security being based on threatening other populations with mass destruction then we will encourage other states to do the same and thus paradoxically we increase our security risk rather than decrease it. The Labour Party has committed to including nuclear weapons in a post-election Strategic Defence and Security Review should they be in government. A serious review of the usefulness of nuclear weapons in dealing with today's problems will conclude that they do not protect us from any real security issues.

### **Required Policies**

11. Nuclear weapons cannot have a role to play in responding to the actual threats we face today. Principally, we already know from the terrible attacks in New York in 2001 and London in 2005 that possession of nuclear weapons by a nuclear weapon state does not dissuade terrorists. In addition, terrorists could never present any accurately located target for such a weapon of indiscriminate devastation. It is obvious that nuclear weapons will not protect us from environmental changes such as floods or drought. Similarly, cyber-attackers will not be deterred by Britain possessing nuclear arms.
12. In fact, the opposite is true. Instead of spending at least £100 billion on a new nuclear weapons system, resources should be invested in addressing the real threats we face. At a time when the armed forces – along with wider society – are facing severe budgetary cuts, it seems inconceivable that a third of the Ministry of Defence's procurement budget should be spent on a strategically useless weapon.

Not surprisingly, military sources have questioned whether this money would be better spend on meeting other, more pressing and relevant military needs. Field Marshal Lord Bramall, General Lord Ramsbotham, General Sir Hugh Beach, and Major General Patrick Cordingley – four former senior military commanders – have written in *The Times* that ‘replacing Trident will be one of the most expensive weapons programmes this country has seen. Going ahead will clearly have long-term consequences for the military and the defence equipment budget that need to be carefully examined’. They pointed out that ‘this decision will have a direct impact on our overstretched Armed Forces’, and that ‘it may well be that money spent on new nuclear weapons will be money that is not available to support our frontline troops, or for crucial counterterrorism work; money not available for buying helicopters, armoured vehicles, frigates or even paying for more manpower’.<sup>28</sup>

13. The cases of Iran and North Korea and their actual or potential nuclear proliferation are of significance to Britain’s military strategy. Both countries were included in the United States’ ‘Axis of Evil’ and in the light of the US-led war on Iraq (the third country in the so-called Axis) not surprisingly had concerns for their security. The response of North Korea was a very clear indication of how proliferation can be provoked: it withdrew from the NPT, saying that it had a deterrent need to develop nuclear weapons. There are many observers who take the view that Iran might well note the double standards of the West with regard to nuclear weapons. Remaining nuclear-armed for at least another half century and by example encouraging other states to take the nuclear road, will ensure that we face those very threats in decades to come that we least want to see.
14. The most effective strategy to guarantee Britain’s security is to work towards nuclear disarmament, rather than pursuing a path which is certain to contribute to proliferation. Britain’s future security will be best provided for by pursuing global disarmament initiatives in tandem with the decision not to replace Trident. The decision on whether or not to replace Britain’s nuclear weapons system must be taken on the basis of what will most contribute to the security of the British people. A decision not to replace Trident will best meet that requirement. It will strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime by ensuring Britain’s compliance with its international treaty obligations; it will deter nuclear proliferation and de-escalate current global and regional tensions; and it will release significant financial resources to meet a range of public spending priorities, including meeting the new security challenges of the twenty-first century.

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<sup>28</sup> ‘Money spent on Trident can’t go on troops’. Field Marshal Lord Bramall, General Lord Ramsbotham, General Sir Beach, and Major General Patrick Cordingley. *The Times*, 21 April 2010: [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest\\_contributors/article7103196.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article7103196.ece)

15. Future threats should not be dealt with by buying a new nuclear weapons system. Pursuing diplomatic negotiations with, rather than an attack on, Syria has resulted in President al-Assad's government agreeing to join the Chemical Weapons Convention and eliminate their entire stockpile of chemical weapons. A new, more positive, era in United States-Iran relations could be about to begin, not as a result of military attack but because of sanctions and negotiation. The government should take note of these developments.
16. The decision not to replace Trident will help shape the type of world we will face in decades to come. Active support for disarmament and non-proliferation will help prevent a new nuclear arms race and increased proliferation. Choosing to replace Trident will ensure that we will face the nuclear threats in the future that we most wish to avoid. The choice we face today is clear: nuclear disarmament or nuclear proliferation and war. A bold initiative by our government not to replace Trident, together with strong promotion of multilateral initiatives, can help reshape the global security context and ensure a future free from the threat of nuclear annihilation.
17. The government's next National Security Strategy should acknowledge the futility of committing vast resources on a nuclear weapons system which will not guarantee the security of the British people. It should instead seek to address the real challenges we face today, as outlined in the 2010 National Security Strategy.

September 2014

#### Conciliation Resources – written evidence

1. Conciliation Resources welcomes the call for evidence by the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy (JCNSS) to inform the next phase of its work on a new National Security Strategy, to be published in 2015.
2. This submission puts forward two arguments: that (1) The basis of a national security strategy should be founded on an informed understanding of how the British people themselves perceive local-to-international security, and their vision, views and priorities for Britain in a safer world; and that, (2) As the policies and approaches the UK Government deploys in responding to conflicts around the world have both direct and indirect impact on national security, there needs to be a paradigm shift in the Government's priorities and approach. Multiple capabilities and strategies are needed to engage with today's complex conflict and peacebuilding challenges.

3. Our submission builds on our experience as an international peacebuilding organisation supporting people through dialogue and mediation in conflict-affected contexts for over 20 years.<sup>29</sup> Conciliation Resources understands well the root causes and drivers of conflict and insecurity in the areas where we work, and along with the wider peacebuilding sector, has built up knowledge through comparative learning of effective ways to respond. We are only too conscious of the potential for conflicts to spread across national boundaries, displacing communities, disrupting livelihoods and giving rise to new and violent conflicts – as well as of the consequences for regional and international security.
4. We are also conscious of the UK's role as an important economic and political player in global affairs, and as such one of myriad factors and actors influencing international, and therefore national security. The UK has a responsibility to uphold international norms and standards that put the lives of vulnerable people first and to explore smarter and more effective conflict-response strategies.

### **Shift from state to human security**

5. In its call for submissions, the JCNSS asked how broadly the new National Security Strategy should define national security. Conciliation Resources would argue that national security should be measured not only by a state's ability to resist external and internal threats, but also by the extent to which the basic needs and security concerns of its citizens are addressed.
6. This people-centred 'human security' approach suggests that a more informed understanding is needed of the needs and views of people affected by conflict and insecurity (organised groups, communities and the wider public), including those of the wider British public.<sup>30</sup> These views need to have their place in the new National Security Strategy. Recent research suggests a significant gap between the UK Government's priorities for and understanding of national security and those of the wider public.<sup>31</sup> For example, economic uncertainty, social disorder and 'Islamophobia' represent a more pressing everyday source of insecurity for many than does terrorism.

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<sup>29</sup> To learn more about the work of Conciliation Resources, visit: [www.c-r.org](http://www.c-r.org)

<sup>30</sup> To note that a number of leading figures engaged in peacebuilding have called greater public dialogue on the nature of security within the UK, in order to ensure that the new National Security Strategy is an accurate reflection of the interests and concerns of those whose security it seeks to defend. See the Ammerdown Invitation: 'Security for the future: In search of a new vision', published online at opendemocracy.net: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/ammerdown-invitation/security-for-future-in-search-of-new-vision>

<sup>31</sup> Findings of survey by Universities of Exeter and Warwick as part of Economic and Social Research Council funded project looking at public attitudes towards security threats: [http://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/featurednews/title\\_246995\\_en.html](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/featurednews/title_246995_en.html)

7. A human security approach, based on people's needs, participation and inclusion, should also be reflected in the Government's external action in conflict-affected contexts. In our submissions to the Government's Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR)<sup>32</sup> and the 2010 Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS)<sup>33</sup>, we called on the Government to support the development of peaceful and resilient societies abroad as a key component of the UK's national security. The BSOS reflects this concern: 'effective local politics and strong mechanisms...weave people into the fabric of decision-making'; 'all sections of the population need to feel that they are part of the warp and weft of society'<sup>34</sup>.
8. In the years since the publication of the last National Security Strategy, the link between poor state-society relations, unaccountable governance and the increased likelihood of instability and conflict has been confirmed in a number of important international policy frameworks and developments.<sup>35</sup> They have highlighted that efforts aimed at bolstering the security of states and their borders fail to address the grievances and concerns of citizens. While the current National Security Strategy (NSS) heavily references the threat of terrorism emanating from fragile, 'failed' or 'failing' states, it only fleetingly discusses the social and demographic changes that fuel many citizens' grievances in these states: such as poor infrastructure, political exclusion, unemployment and resource pressures.<sup>36</sup>
9. Policies and practices which identify and respond to the security needs and perceptions of those most affected by conflict can help tackle the root causes of instability<sup>37</sup> and ultimately contribute to the reduction of foreign threats. Violent extremism, both in the UK and abroad, is as likely to be rooted in a legacy of political and economic exclusion, past conflicts or the denial of human rights, as it is in zeal for a particular ideology or religion. This implies a need for greater coherence between the UK's counter-terrorist and conflict prevention policies.

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.c-r.org/resources/submission-uk-strategic-defence-and-security-review-peaceful-and-resilient-societies>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.c-r.org/resources/reflections-and-recommendations-uk%E2%80%99s-building-stability-overseas-strategy>

<sup>34</sup> p12, HMG Building Stability Overseas Strategy: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/32960/bsos-july-11.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/32960/bsos-july-11.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> Inter alia: the World Bank World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTWDRS/0..contentMDK:23252415~pagePK:478093~piPK:477627~theSitePK:477624,00.html>); The High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda report: 'A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development' (<http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf>); The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (<http://www.newdeal4peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/new-deal-for-engagement-in-fragile-states-en.pdf>)

<sup>36</sup> p17, A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy (2010)

<sup>37</sup> p32, *ibid*, National Security Task number 2 – 'Tackle at root the causes of instability'

## **Investing more and long-term in the full range of conflict prevention tools and capabilities**

10. The National Security Strategy identifies ‘shaping a stable world’ as one of its key strategic objectives, with an emphasis on the need both to ‘address trends that contribute to instability’ as well as to ‘focus on early identification and mitigation of risks’<sup>38</sup>. HMG has adopted a disappointingly narrow interpretation of this objective, investing too heavily in interventions that are limited to the containment of violence and short-term mitigation of consequences of conflict,<sup>39</sup> such as military interventions or peacekeeping missions. These actions are of limited long-term value to UK national security if they do not help to help people to resolve the structural drivers of conflict that cause violent actors to appear, and reappear, in fragile states.
11. We question whether a reliance on such costly and resource-heavy interventions is appropriate, effective and sustainable given on-going spending cuts to military capabilities, as noted by the JCNSS<sup>40</sup>. The new National Security Strategy must put forward a smarter approach that reduces the UK’s reliance on crisis management interventions and humanely and sustainably addresses sources of insecurity. It is time to give shift the emphasis from ‘shaping’ or ‘building’, to ‘supporting’ and ‘enabling’ positive processes of change.
12. During its August 2014 presidency of the UN Security Council, the UK initiated an important debate on conflict prevention,<sup>41</sup> which recognised that conflict prevention tools, such as negotiation, mediation and conciliation, had not been fully utilised by the Council. The British Ambassador to the UN, Mark Lyall Grant, told the debate that the Council ‘must stop acting only in crisis mode’ and ‘switch from a mindset of reaction to prevention’.<sup>42</sup> If the UK is to make this switch itself, then it must bolster its soft power assets and work more effectively with competent multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental partners<sup>43</sup>; develop its competencies in mediation and conciliation and alliance building; and value and develop the art of support to locally and nationally led and owned (and internationally supported) peace processes. It must

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<sup>38</sup> p21, *ibid*

<sup>39</sup> p29, *ibid*

<sup>40</sup> p14, Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy: The Work of the Committee on the National Security Strategy in 2013-2014 – First Report of Session 2013-2014:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt201314/jtselect/jtnatsec/169/169.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> Security Council 7247<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 21 August 2014 (SC/11528):

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2014/sc11528.doc.htm>

<sup>42</sup> Security Council 7247<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 21 August 2014 (SC/11528):

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2014/sc11528.doc.htm>

<sup>43</sup> The UK has an exceptionally developed and able sector, which includes organisations such as Saferworld, Conciliation Resources, International Alert, Inter Mediate, Peace Direct, Cord, Concordis and many others.



develop strategies to use these to good effect in regions where threats to UK national security can evolve.

13. Such a shift would require the UK Government to make greater investment in a long-term, preventative approach and capabilities<sup>44</sup> that prioritise consultation, dialogue, understanding and analysis in order to identify and address structural drivers of insecurity. This investment should not lapse at the term of political office; as such it means a more sustained and cross-party commitment to effective conflict prevention. The Government's intention, as expressed in its Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS), to invest in upstream prevention<sup>45</sup> as a key pillar of its strategic response to instability and conflict should be strengthened and prioritised under the forthcoming Conflict, Security and Stability Fund (CSSF).<sup>46</sup> Oversight of the CSSF by the National Security Council is an opportunity to ensure that all elements of UK external engagement work holistically towards the same set of objectives underpinned by BSOS' vision and priorities.

#### **A commitment to support and promote local ownership and agency in peace processes**

14. Our peacebuilding experience, as well as recognised good practice, tells us that sustainable political settlements ultimately come from or are owned by actors and initiatives within conflict-affected societies. Local ownership of solutions, as well as some of the compromises in achieving peace, is essential to the popular legitimacy of a peace process and ensuing political settlement. Legitimate peace processes, which are broadly inclusive of society and recognise multiple sources of authority, can provide a solid platform for states to navigate a path away from instability.<sup>47</sup>
15. There are therefore inherent limits to our, and that of the UK Government, ability and responsibility to 'build' stability and peace abroad. Yet there is much that the UK can do to *support, accompany, promote, and enable* locally driven peace processes and initiatives. Developing good practice, investing in expertise and strategies, and placing mediation and peacebuilding on a higher footing in relation to security and military

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<sup>44</sup> Specifically capabilities for conflict resolution and peace process support that address the challenges of engaging with people, groups and difficult to reach non-state actors. These are capabilities within Whitehall, at the EU and UN, but also part of the expertise of UK charities.

<sup>45</sup> p12, HMG Building Stability Overseas Strategy:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/32960/bsos-july-11.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/32960/bsos-july-11.pdf): 'helping to build strong, legitimate institutions and robust societies in fragile countries that are capable of managing tensions and shocks so that there is a lower likelihood of instability and conflict'

<sup>46</sup> See briefing paper by Conciliation Resources, International Alert and Saferworld, Sep. 2014, on the forthcoming Conflict, Stability and Security Fund: <http://www.c-r.org/resources/investing-long-term-peace-new-conflict-stability-and-security-fund>

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, Conciliation Resources publication 'Legitimacy and peace processes: from coercion to consent', 2014 <http://www.c-r.org/accord-project/legitimacy-and-peace-processes>

responses in the toolkit of responses to conflict, would be an economic, people-centred and politically effective way to enhance national security. Furthermore, finding ways to forge new and collaborative partnerships, which will have collective impact on complex conflict systems, is a key challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

16. Finally, the NSS argues that, in order to respond to risks before they develop into crises, ‘our diplomats must thoroughly understand the local situation on the ground so that they can influence it’.<sup>48</sup> People living in the midst of conflict often have the best understanding of local conflict dynamics, and are therefore best placed, with external support where needed, to drive forward non-violent initiatives that address grievances, strengthen societal resilience and build political participation and inclusion. What they often lack is the space to explore this collectively, to communicate their perspectives to decision-makers, and to discover their agency over the situation affecting them. The UK Government should draw on this wealth of insight and peacebuilding potential in these state-society relationships, so often mediated by UK charities and other organisations, through consultation and dialogue with representatives of those most affected by conflict.

September 2014

Dr Rory Cormac<sup>49</sup> – written evidence

#### Executive Summary:

- Economic constraints will not preclude attempts to maintain global influence, but this does not necessarily mean such attempts are “unrealistic”;
- The current climate will create an increase in covert action and special operations as a means to plug the gap between capability and perceived responsibilities;
- Such activity is an important part of a government’s arsenal but is also risky;
- It must not be treated as a “silver bullet” to bypass costs and maintain global influence.

1. The UK will plan to maintain its global influence. The question, as acknowledged by JCNSS, is whether this is realistic given political, strategic, and particularly economic constraints. The problem, however, is far from new. Britain has been in relative and steady decline since the end of the Second World (at the very latest). Nonetheless, successive governments have continually sought to maintain the global role. This has created **a gap between capabilities on the one hand and perceived responsibilities or policy goals on the other**. This gap must be addressed by the NSS.

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<sup>48</sup> Foreword, A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy (2010)

<sup>49</sup> Dr Rory Cormac is an Assistant Professor of International Relations. His research specialises in British approaches to covert operations since 1945.

2. Faced with such a paradox, successive governments (of both colours) have often turned to unorthodox measures to plug the gap. In such circumstances, event-shaping action from intelligence and Special Forces becomes increasingly appealing. Examination of the declassified historical record offers voluminous examples of governments resorting to covert action – a state’s intervention in the affairs of another in a plausibly deniable manner – and Special Forces in these circumstances.

3. **Conditions are ripe for use of such measures in 2015.** Firstly, the climate of ongoing austerity combined with British pretensions as a global power creates such a framework. Indeed, the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review placed a premium on the role of Special Forces and intelligence. Secondly, the National Security Council machinery institutionalises regular contact between senior policymakers and the intelligence chiefs, again creating a framework conducive to such activity. Thirdly, counter-terrorism necessitates the use of Special Forces and a more “active” role for the intelligence community. And counter-terrorism will undoubtedly remain both a core priority and a forum in which Britain will seek to maintain a global role. **A combination of these three factors will likely lead to an increase in covert action.**

4. Numerous examples have come to light of Britain’s use of SIS and Special Forces since 2010. Firstly, SIS and Special Forces were involved in Libya – including both a bungled and later more successful operation. Secondly, the SIS website clearly acknowledges the agency’s role in detecting and disrupting terrorist threats overseas. Thirdly, in 2012, the Chief of SIS acknowledged that British covert operations had disrupted the Iranian nuclear programme. Fourthly, in 2013, the Defence Secretary announced a British dedicated capability to counter-attack in cyber-space. Fifthly, in 2014 documents stolen by Edward Snowden demonstrated GCHQ moving into the realm of cyber covert action. Increasingly sophisticated online operations have targeted Iran, Serious and Organised Crime, as well as terrorist and insurgent groups. It can be assumed many other operations have rightly not come to light.

5. Such activity is likely to be increasingly seen as a means of: a) projecting British influence; b) securing British interests; c) protecting British security, and; d) maintaining the global role. This is not necessarily a bad thing. It is important to move beyond the normative considerations usually clouding analysis. **Covert action and use of Special Forces is, and will remain, a crucial part of a government’s arsenal.**

6. Given the risks involved however, it is important to critically consider the British approach. **The British government should not undertake such activity as a “silver bullet” designed to bypass economic and political constraints in order to maintain global influence.**

7. The National Security Council machinery constitutes a somewhat horizontal approach to overseeing such activity. **This has important benefits.** Firstly, it ensures interdepartmental coordination, which is particularly important in an era of increased “jointery” between Special Forces and the intelligence services. Secondly, it ensures interdepartmental scrutiny. This is, of course, vital in considering potential consequences.

Committees have traditionally tempered more aggressive or ambitious proposals. Thirdly, it sets important guidelines and boundaries for the scope of such activity. This ensures policy coherence and avoids mission creep (something to which covert action has traditionally been prone as ministers develop personal attachment to the policy).

8. The current machinery is not without drawbacks, however. **Previous incarnations of a horizontal approach suffered from two problems.** Firstly, committees could be somewhat cumbersome and unwieldy. They ground to gridlock. Secondly, they can bypass the traditional departmental policymaking channels and erode ministerial responsibility. When disconnected from overt policy, covert action has time and again led to damaging repercussions. Accordingly, British approaches to such activity since 1945 have fluctuated between horizontal and vertical bureaucratic approaches.

9. In conclusion, **economic constraints will not preclude attempts to maintain global influence.** This does not necessarily mean such attempts are “unrealistic”. The current climate will merely create an increase in covert action and special operations as a means to plug the gap between capability and perceived responsibilities. As such, the government will likely continue to emphasise the role of intelligence and Special Forces. This pattern has happened throughout the recent past and we have already seen examples since 2010. Such activity is an important part of a government’s arsenal. However, it is also risky. The NSS should therefore ensure that employment is adequately scrutinised, coordinated, and forms part of a coherent overarching policy. It must not be treated as a “silver bullet” to bypass costs and maintain global influence.

#### A Defence & Strategy Research Group – written evidence

Investigating incoherence and weakness in the United Kingdom’s Defence & Security Strategies

1. The Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy (JCNSS) calls for evidence to inform its next phase of work. It said this should cover energy security and domestic resilience, as well as foreign policy and defence, and criticised as unrealistic the Government’s stated policy expectation of no shrinkage in the UK’s international influence. This input is made by DefenceSynergia and uses the JCNSS questions (**in bold**) below to focus each response.

2. **The UK’s national security priorities: What should be the UK’s national security priorities for the next twenty years, and how should these steer the next NSS?**

3. DefenceSynergia (DS) would suggest that the JCNSS question above rather ignores the requirement for strategy to be articulated before setting the national security priorities. In saying this we support the following quote: *“...nor is strategy – despite the beliefs of George Bush and Jack Straw to the contrary – a synonym for policy.”* (Professor Sir Hew Strachan, page 27, 'On the Direction of War' Cambridge University Press, 2014)

4. The question we ask is: does the UK have an articulated grand strategy and if so what is it and where is it published? The Prime Minister (PM) recently gave his view to the JCNSS and in so doing David Cameron said the following in an answer to Lord Waldegrave of

North Hill in respect of his understanding of the workings of national strategy: *“To me, strategy is about setting out a very clear series of goals that you want to meet and then making sure that you have sensible means for achieving those goals. I do not have to look at a bit of paper to tell us what our strategy is: it is to restore Britain’s economic strength, it is to tie us to the fast growing parts of the world, it is to refresh and enhance the great alliances that we have, it is to tackle the threats that could threaten our country—and it is to make sure that we do this right across government and it is not just the Foreign Office fighting for us abroad but every single bit of government working together. That is the strategy...Of course in the NSC we discuss strategy, but I want us to determine policy, I want us to agree action, and I want us to check that we have done what we said we were going to do. To me, that is not misusing the NSC and making it too much about implementation rather than strategy; it is the right use.”*

5. This is an incredibly muddled statement to make, and a very dangerous and confusing stance for a Prime Minister to take. A defined - written - Strategy is an indispensable articulation of principles that drive the government. It is the focal point, the single point of reference, for all ministers, civil servants, and senior figures in our government departments, for determining their departmental plans and associated resourcing and budgeting that ensures ‘joined up government’. Moreover, having set the strategy, the government - the Cabinet - must have something against which to measure their implementation of the strategy using Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, Timely (SMART) and verifiable metrics and data. The risk of not having a Strategy is that the roads travelled will diverge and go down their own departmental silo priorities and focus, rather than meet at the destination to achieve a coherent and coordinated government effect.

6. If the PM is confident that he has a formulated strategy, why should he feel it unnecessary to see it articulated? If the PM (like the JCNSS) expects to see *“every single bit of government working together”* all departments must surely have an unambiguous understanding of what the strategy is and that it is the highest level of direction for collective government policy? It is an odd governmental practice to expect departments of state formally to work on the basis of the minutes of past National Security Council (NSC) meetings and their interpretation of the PM’s strategic thoughts. Yet without further explanation from the PM this is certainly one worrying interpretation of his remarks.

7. Equally, perhaps more worrying, is the PM's drift in logic where he appears to slip all too easily between strategy, policy and plans with little effort to explain how and where he believes they interrelate. Does the PM understand what strategy is, never mind whether he believes he has one? To which can be added; is the NSC the right place to set and implement policy when, by the PM's own admission later in his evidence, the NSC does not always have the time to discuss the overarching strategy? In any event we are still left with the question - how did the PM formulate his four strategic nodal points and are they really a national strategy?

8. In order to understand why all this is important DS analysed the terms commonly used by the PM and others in this debate – typically, ways, means, ends, goals and policy -

and how they should relate to strategy. We concluded that usage and definition required ratification.

9. Many talk of **Ends, Ways and Means** in relation to government foreign, defence and security policy and all are valid in their own way but when discussing strategy it is as well to understand the terms and their effect within the process. Therefore, DS believes that the terms **Destination, Direction and Enablers** are more apposite in describing the building blocks to grand strategy. Looked at in this way Destination is the key for establishing the highest level UK Grand Strategic goals to be attained; Direction defines the Policy; Enablers quantify the budget and resources to meet policy and achieve the Destination.

10. The PM's verbally articulated strategic vision is “...to restore Britain’s economic strength...to tie us to the fast growing parts of the world...refresh and enhance the great alliances that we have...tackle the threats that could threaten our country...to do this right across government not just through the Foreign Office fighting for UK abroad but every single bit of government working together”. Therefore, these destinations (his strategic vision) must be supported by clearly articulated, pan-government coordinated and coherent, direction and adequately funded enablers (the policy actions) to achieve the destination. Not to do so relegates strategic vision from achievable to a mere wish list of worthy aspirations commanding low priority with no certainty they will be achieved. Possibly worse, be achieved and no one know it because there is no point of reference against which to measure success.

11. The PM should not be shy of enshrining his vision (his strategic destination) as the highest level of government policy for all departments of state to chart their course (policy direction) and to which they must devote resources (policy enablers)? Otherwise his publicly stated view that “*I do not have to look at a bit of paper to tell us what our strategy is*” may set His ground rules but sends the wrong message, or allows him to veer and haul his ‘strategy’ at a whim and without the ability to be held to account. Is it any wonder that the PM's other central message “*every single bit of government working together*” seems, particularly where the Treasury is concerned, to be honoured more in the breach than the observance. Therefore, articulate the strategy in the NSS and then set the pan-department security priorities (not just the Ministry of Defence) to achieve it.

12. **The UK’s place in the world: Should the UK plan to maintain its global influence? Should we aim for a national consensus on the UK’s future place in the world?**

13. The DS view is that UK global influence is a valuable but vulnerable asset. The UK's place in the world has been driven by history and active involvement in international affairs and UK foreign policy and defence doctrine have developed to match this legacy paradigm. DS believes that this paradigm is extant - as, apparently, does HMG - but that the prevailing financial position of the nation is being allowed to fudge strategic decisions. However, the UK, whilst cognisant of its history, mustn’t allow the past to restrictively constrain the future.

14. The decades since the end of WWII have been characterised by the continuous engagement of successive British governments in international affairs whilst steadily

unlinking their foreign policy aspirations from the military enablers (hard power capability) required to match policy. Since 1991 and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact the trend towards taking a 'peace dividend' has gathered pace with a preference for diplomatic-soft-power solutions that, in a strategic vacuum, have led to open ended commitments, with no measurable end effect success, because political end game and hard-power enablers are under-funded and policy planning acumen is deficient.

15. Over two decades Her Majesty's forces have conducted many foreign intervention operations: Iraq x 2, Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Libya, Mali, and Afghanistan. If these operations have a common denominator it is difficult to accurately define except perhaps to somewhat lazily apply the term 'counter insurgency' (COIN) to the way most eventually panned out. Yet each operation differed in the way the UK became involved; why the UK became involved; the warning time frame; the expected and actual outcome; and under who's auspices UK intervened in the first place. There is often confusion between the initial and eventual reasons for intervention: national interest, United Nations Mandate, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), European Union, or ally request? Hence commitment to operations without strategic vision, an international political and diplomatic plan supporting combat intervention, joint international understanding and an agreed 'measurable end game' have proved to be a recipe for mission creep, over extension, loss of public support, and unnecessary expense of lives and treasure.

16. Indeed, as the British forces have not engaged alone in a major combat operation since the 1982 Falklands campaign – the last time UK had the ability to deploy its forces as an integrated war-fighting, war-winning single-force capability - it is easy to see how and why current thinking in respect of UK defence doctrine and planning are under review. However, the recent crisis in the Crimea and Eastern Ukraine has suddenly refocused NATO attention back onto its Eastern borders so now is probably not the time for the UK to become fixated upon soft-power COIN operations to the exclusion of all else. If Russian unpredictability warns of anything, it is that peer on peer warfare may not be as remote a possibility as perhaps some analysts formerly believed. And while a major war with a peer competitor is certainly an unwelcome prospect, simply ignoring it is not the answer – prepared, credible, coordinated deterrence and coherent coalition action is.

17. Thus it is incumbent upon all NATO nations to reflect that COIN, in one guise or another, is here to stay - but that a peer on peer engagement is still a threat to prepare for if only to prevent a major war occurring in the first place. Perception of weakness is a variable and NATO fire power vested in high-end technology, large mobile armies, armour, warships and jet aircraft may not impress or deter jihad fighters who may require a more nuanced and subtle approach. Whilst, hard power enablers and robust cooperative military actions, planning, and shows of strength are definitely a factor that potential peer adversaries like Mr Putin consider and are likely to factor into their own strategy. However, as previously stated, international security and stability are not just about hard power. Military activity must be viewed as part of a coordinated and coherent 'smart security' strategy and approach linking political, diplomatic, economic and international development activity that identify, pressurize and engage an adversary's 'centres of gravity' and pain points to instil the required end effect and desired behaviours.

18. Future UK foreign and defence policy is not therefore a zero sum game, a case of either or, but a balance to be struck between what we know and what we predict. Hence the lessons learnt in COIN operations must not be ignored and service training, equipment and culture must adapt to allow for an effective, appropriate and measured response in the future. The UK military must have the resources, equipment and training to operate along a sliding scale of intervention from peace keeping to formation combat. At the lower end of the spectrum this may require the formation of a unique Brigade trained and equipped to specialise in conducting COIN operations world wide. However, this new COIN formation must be additional, and be able to contribute to the capacity, capability and numbers of conventional and nuclear deterrent war fighting assets that allow UK forces to be ready to deter and/or counter emerging peer level threats. Vice versa, to sustain a COIN Brigade will require roulement from the wider military units.

19. Therefore, now is certainly not the time for UK to withdraw from international obligations – if we do not adequately fund our own defence is it reasonable to ask others to do it for us? Hence, DS argues that the gaps in our defences are large, widening and unsustainable on land, sea and in the air. As an example of that, it recently took more than 24 hours to get the only available RN vessel – a Type 45 Destroyer – from the south coast to the Moray Firth to intercept a previously undetected and unchallenged Russian cruiser that remained just outside the 3 mile coastal zone. No ally was tasked to do this, and this effects readiness.

20. To examine just one example in respect of readiness (there are many others). It takes over a decade, if not 20 years, to design, build, test and field a new fast jet (F-35), it takes at least 3 years to train the aircrew to combat ready status, a little less for ground crew. Time, therefore, is the crux of readiness. In the modern era the complexity of weapons platforms, the training and available industrial capacity dictate that 'you fight with what you have on day one' with little leeway for reinforcement (minimum buy of equipment) or battle casualty replacements (minimal Armed Forces personnel). Unless the warning time for war is in years not months there is simply no time to generate significant new or extra capability and capacity. And, as we never know when the clock starts to tick, whilst belligerents who set the agenda do, balanced-in-place-forces are the only guarantee of deterrence. Autocrats know this! Government hubris is transparent to a prospective enemy, who will make his own assessment of strength, and react accordingly. If UK is perceived weak, no amount of hubris-laden PM briefings will shore up the fallen wall. Si vis pacem, para bellum.

**21. Strategic Choices: How can the next NSS be made most useful in guiding decisions in Government and long-term spending decisions?**

22. In seeking to address this complex question DS has considered one major aspect of UK strategic international involvement – the United Nations. Strategic choices may be a government's responsibility but action and subsequent spending is most often dictated by external events forcing action to honour international treaty obligations. For UK nothing is more defining in this respect than our position as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).



23. Since the formation of the United Nations (UN), international diplomacy has been locked into a legal position dictated through undertakings in the overarching UN Charter with action restrained or enabled by UNSC resolutions and oversight and obligations inherent in historically extant international jurisprudence. The attitudes and actions of nations are judged through this prism of internationally accepted legal, ethical and moral behaviour.

24. But does this international system perform in practice? How do legal, ethical and moral imperatives impact on nations? Notwithstanding the UN Charter, how do the realities of strategic necessity in international diplomacy - the application of soft, flexible (smart) and hard power in pursuit of national interests impact on the need for and legitimacy of International Intervention Operations?

25. **Syria - An unresolved case study:** Consider the running sore that is the latest manifestation of the 'Arab Spring' - Syria. Thus far the toll in the 3 year uprising is estimated to be well over 100,000 killed on all sides and circa three million displaced people taking refuge in camps in neighbouring Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq. The European Union has imposed and, in response to French and British lobbying, lifted an arms embargo; the USA has talked of 'red lines' if WMD are used by the regime and then reneged from direct intervention; Russia and Iran have continued to support the Assad regime with advisers and weapons; Gulf states support and arm the 'rebels'; NATO has deployed anti-aircraft missile systems to Turkey (Russia has done the same in Syria) and Israel has attacked Syrian munitions sites.

26. The Assad regime realises that the UN is incapable of speaking with one voice and that this, de facto, renders the UN executive powerless to effectively intervene directly in this internecine struggle. In acknowledging this ineffectual role it would be remiss not to recognise the constraint that a lack of 'unanimous consent' imposes on the Secretary General through the arcane workings of the UNSC, not least when the 5 permanent members - Russia, China, USA, France and the UK - fail to agree a course of action. To fill this vacuum in international solidarity, nations tend to fall back upon the only common denominator open to them - their own national interests.

27. In this latter respect, Iran and the Gulf states, and their predominant Alawite, Shiite & Sunni groupings, whilst all Muslim, have diametrically opposed geopolitical and religious interests intertwined in Middle East politics. This generates issues for neighbours such as Israel, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan who all have border stability and internal security concerns as a fallout of Syrian, and now Iraqi internal conflicts. The USA, France and UK - stymied by the legalities preventing 'Regime Change' (and no doubt lessons learned of the consequential failures of such intervention over the last 30 years) - are unable to convince China and Russia that the Assad regime must be forced to go if stability is to be restored to the region and the Syrian people offered respite from a brutal regime. All this is set against an international background in which China is vying for greater influence in all regions of the world and Russia is looking to its own interests and influence in the Eastern Mediterranean and what it sees as its own backyard – The Caucasuses and Ukraine.

28. When British troops were assigned to UN forces on peacekeeping and humanitarian relief duties in the Bosnia-Herzegovina region of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in 1992 Her Majesty's Government (HMG) was responding to a series of UNSC resolutions initiated by UNSC 743. This willingness of HMG to offer forces and aid in response to UNSC resolutions was merely an extension of a long history of support by the UK for the UN going back to Korea in 1950. However, as the United States (US) and British intervention in Iraq in 2003 illustrates, a UNSC resolution (UNSC 1441) can provide a wide range of interpretation and lead to legal challenge.

29. However, for the UK independent intervention operations are not as frequent as some might think. Indeed, since the 1982 Falklands War, UK interventions have been as a consequence of legally authorised and mandated UN operations – Iraq 2003 being a notable possible exception. But in Syria what we appear to be left with is diplomatic stalemate with the USA led allies being caught in the international legitimacy and (lack of) credibility and influence in the ME trap. Thus Russia successfully argues that regime change in Syria is illegal whilst ignoring their own actions in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine despite majority UN General Assembly disapproval of both Assad's and Putin's conduct. The UN 'Responsibility to Protect' concept seeming to be effectively moribund as a lack of unanimous consent has forced status quo by default, preventing any action or intervention that is not covered by a UNSC resolution.

30. One could argue that this is a good thing if the net effect is to prevent wider conflict escalation or unilateral intervention in another State due to disagreement about its activities, but a bad thing if the result is to hamper conflict resolution and/or prevent the UN from protecting innocent citizens from harm. However, this could be used as a double-edged sword against UK global interests. **To this end, and to avoid another UNSC 1441 débâcle, the JCNSS might consider that there is a case for UK to lead on UN reform in this area.**

31. From an MoD, National Security and Defence perspective there must be a clear and tangible 'line of sight' between the UK's Grand Strategy defining its role in the world, its external and internal security and defence strategy, through the required supporting Military Tasks and likely military planning scenarios and contingent operation assumptions. These Military Tasks and operational assumptions drive the military Capabilities required, determine the equipment and people needed, thus, the equipment procurement programme and military personnel recruiting, training and Force Elements at Readiness and Force Element sustainability, and ultimately the Defence budget.

32. As UK foreign policy interventions have been traditionally exercised, at times, determined, by international legal treaty – stand fast the right to unilateral action in immediate self defence – a revised NSS narrative must surely start with this as its guiding principal statement. Ultimately the defence, foreign policy and foreign aid budgets will be primarily driven by UK's international UN obligations.

33. **International relationships: Which will be the UK's critical international relationships over the next 20 years?**

34. DS, like many observers of the two premier Western alliances – NATO & EU – cannot help but sense the divergence of interpretation in aims and objectives that the allied nation's involved bring to the two organisations. So, for example, after four decades of membership the UK has at best an ambiguous relationship with the EU over sovereignty and prefers, for defence and security, to see NATO as its prime focus. Conversely Germany and France see sovereignty as a more negotiable aspect of their relationship and are far more committed to EU institutions than UK. This heavily inclines them towards a European military command and control position despite the certain knowledge that current UK thinking is opposed. Hence, whilst the UK is economically tied into the European project, in security terms the United States of America (USA) is the first among equals when British security interests are at stake. NATO, because of USA leadership, coming a very close second. The Australia, Canada, UK, USA (AUSCANUKUS) alliances being next in line. After that would come the EU and individually or bilaterally France, Poland, Norway, India, Pakistan, Japan, the 5 power agreement (Singapore, USA, Australia, New Zealand and UK) possibly Brazil? Every nation and treaty alliance listed has strengths and weaknesses but UK must do better at “calibrating” the importance of each treaty/range of agreements which must be made based on a Nationally agreed and desired ‘place in the world’ - Strategy.

**35. How should the 2015 NSS handle the uncertainty over the UK’s role in Europe?**

36. The DS position is that the political future is uncertain especially with the ground swell of public discontent with aspects of EU membership. An openly debated and articulated strategic narrative will assist the public to decide where UK's national interests lie. In the interim the UK must publish a “Plan B” for an exit from the EU having made judgements based on in depth discussions with the full range of allies, and some adversaries perhaps, who will be affected.

**37. Risks and contingency planning: In 2014 the JCNSS said, “in our work we have become concerned that in some areas the Government seems genuinely not to have any contingency plans. This is dangerous and unwise. (Paragraph 34).”**

38. DS asserts that a core task of the NSS should be to audit contingency plans across Government for substance and cohesion. Examinations, exercises, training and resourcing need to be prioritised and assessed against realistic strategic scenarios that have been developed by a combination of government and independent specialists who have equal status on a sub-committee of the NSC.

**39. What are the main risks to the UK’s national security?**

40. There are published and classified papers identifying risks to National Security. These also outline remedial activities, but lack of public knowledge, restricted access and the mercurial interest of the media generally ensure that most of this good work remains unheralded. However, DS has identified resource supply as a major UK 'capability interest'. The primary threat – whether oil, food, raw materials, information or cash flow - being from resource starvation potentially causing economic chaos and social unrest. In earlier evidence to the PASC in 2011 DS wrote: *“Therefore, DS contends that these 'Capability Interests' are enabled by a combination of political, commercial, diplomatic and military means all of*

*which are interlinked domestically and internationally through a stable global diplomatic environment which is enhanced by much admired British core values. In turn these shared values create the conditions essential for manufacturing and world trade to flourish and for UK to prosper".* Hence DS contends that it is no giant leap to deduce that protection of these vital interests must form the core of UK strategic thinking. As history has consistently demonstrated, the UK's primary 'Capability Interest' has been maritime not continental: the principle vulnerability of the British Isles, whether threatened by Napoleon, The Kaiser, Hitler or a modern day equivalent, being resource starvation. Furthermore, whilst direct invasion of the UK mainland may still be viewed as a distant threat it is still an issue for overseas territories (The Falklands Dilemma) and European allies – hence UK support of NATO and the UN is extant.

**41. What are the main risks to the UK's national security? Is the Government's horizon-scanning effective, and are our national contingency plans adequate?**

42. In relation to the part of the question concerning national contingency plans, these are probably inadequate but what there is may be all that is affordable now. The unanswered question is, will any government allocate greater resources to achieve more as the economy improves? In this respect, there must be a priority list published to explain to the public where extra money would be used when it becomes available? An indication of these priorities would be invaluable to taxpayers (voters) even if the Government of the day might not like them published. Defence is a national – non political – activity.

**43. Scope: How broadly should the NSS define national security?**

44. All issues that threaten the UK should be covered – cyber, resources, existential, domestic. However, with International Companies becoming more influential than some Governments, their viewpoints should be considered and government must learn from them. In many cases the International Company makes decisions that are faster, better considered from the aspect of risk and outcome than Governments. This is because they tend to be more clearly focused structures that are responsible and accountable for their long and short term decisions. In the world of successful commerce innovation is rewarded and the hard lessons of failure acknowledged. Often those that learn the lessons are able to 'try again' and succeed.

**CONCLUSION**

45. A full range of the elements that can contribute to the formulation of a National (GRAND) Strategy are "out there" but successive governments have seen fit to ignore the reality of the UK's strengths and, most particularly, weaknesses which do not fit with the zeitgeist of the age. Lulled into complacency following the perceived end of the Cold War and declarations that real emerging threats were of little consequence, our "Establishment" has sought to entice the British people into personal profligacy at the risk of numbing their understanding that the world is an increasingly dangerous and unpredictable place. Austerity measures combined with Chinese and Mr Putin's ambitions may be reversing this trend so, this may well be the very best time to articulate, very clearly and concisely, the

above covered elements into a strategic vision that defines the UK's stance for and against the changes and emerging threats the world is now facing.

**46. Following the PM's lead as outlined in paragraph 4 above DS might echo his thoughts and say "The United Kingdom's Grand Strategy is":**

- To take all measures that maintain Britain's economic strength through sound financial and monetary measures allied to the maintenance of free international trade.
- To make full and proportionate contributions to those alliances that contribute to and ensure world peace; most particularly, the UK's seat on the UN Security Council must be retained and supported by a judicious mix of hard, soft and flexible (smart) power.
- To maintain and, where necessary, improve the living standards of all UK's people and make a valid contribution to the well-being of the underprivileged in the wider world.
- To make a leading contribution to the search for the very best use of the world's energy and raw material resources.

Professor Andrew M Dorman, Centre for British Defence and Security Studies, King's College London<sup>50</sup> – written evidence

**Background**

1. In 2010 it was originally envisaged that the next Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) would be a relative modest affair which marked time as the armed forces and defence more broadly transitioned to the 2020 structures. No mention was made of a follow on to the National Security Strategy (NSS), although many have assumed that a new NSS would accompany the next SDSR. However, events in Libya and more recently in the Ukraine, Syria and Iraq raise question marks about the assumptions contained within the NSS about relative stability prior to 2020. Moreover, the recent NATO Summit has led to the pledge to create a new rapid reaction force to supplement the existing NATO Response Force with the British government apparently pledging an all arms battle-group and a brigade headquarters to the new force.<sup>51</sup>

2. The 2010 NSS was the third version to emerge in little over two years. Despite the fact that it, and the accompanying SDSR and Spending Review, was put together in the space of about five months it was a significant improvement on its' two predecessors for three reasons. The first reason was that, unlike its' two predecessors, the 2010 version sought to provide a framework to prioritise the various threats and dangers identified. Second, the 2010 NSS went beyond merely identifying that the world is dangerous but then identified through the 2010 SDSR various mechanisms to tackle these threats and challenges. Third,

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<sup>50</sup> The analysis, opinions and conclusions expressed or implied in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Joint Services Command & Staff College, the Defence Academy, the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence or any other government agency.

<sup>51</sup> Brooks Tigner, 'NATO works to flesh out Readiness Action Plan', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, vol.51, no.38, 17 September 2014, p.5.

the 2010 NSS and SDSR were accompanied by the development of a structure to implement their findings including a bi-annual review of the new National Risk Register, National Security Advisor and National Security Council.

3. Linked to the NSS, in general many have welcomed the creation of the National Security Council but there have been calls, particularly from Lord West the former First Sea Lord and Labour Security Minister, to have a political appointee to the National Security Advisor role and he has been keen to put his name forward. Few have criticised the creation of a national register, although the apparent exclusion of Scottish independence as 'too political' somewhat weakened its credibility, and have not challenged the basic reasoning behind its establishment. Similarly, the adoption of a risk based approach to the NSS has also been welcomed and there has not been any significant call for a change to the basic methodology used. Rather, the criticisms outlined push for a more vigorous national security process in which the National Security Council and its' supporting secretariat play a greater role.

4. What is not clear is whether the promised 2015-6 SDSR will also be accompanied by a new or updated National Security Strategy. Whilst it was a sensible move to provide for regular defence reviews it would also have made sense to also commit successive governments to a similar process for the National Security Strategy. The process is also hampered by the fact that a general election precedes it. In 2010 the Ministry of Defence was surprisingly allowed to publish a Green Paper in February 2010. It does not look as though this will be repeated which means that the level of preparatory work undertaken before the new government enters office in May 2015 will be correspondingly less. A more sensible approach would be for the main political parties to agree on a process whereby much the preparatory staff work each new NSS and SDSR is undertaken and perhaps published as a Green Paper just prior to the general election ready with the acceptance that this does not necessarily reflect the views of the government of the day. This would put the incoming government in a better position to then conduct the NSS and SDSR.

5. Nevertheless, both the 2010 NSS and SDSR have been subject to significant criticism particularly in terms of the cuts made to various defence capabilities. Stepping back from individual decisions, the underlying issue is really the failure to fully integrate the NSS and SDSR. For example, neither the army's initial 2010 construct nor its subsequent 2012 variant did not really address the primary concerns that the NSS had set out. The overall defence package looked far too land-centric reflecting more the weight of influence within the Ministry of Defence than the more maritime-air focus articulated within the NSS.<sup>52</sup>

6. It is also clear that the five months used to develop the 2010 NSS and SDSR prevented the level of wider consultation seen in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review. Moreover, much of the consultation which did take place was limited to select London based think-tanks. This not only limited the level of input but also meant that much of the cutting edge academic thinking was excluded as the government chose to remain within the London think-tank bubble.

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<sup>52</sup> General David Richards, 'One hell of a battle: defending the army against Whitehall', *The Times*, 1 October 2014, p.14.

### **Britain's place in the world**

7. A number of commentators and previous witnesses have put forward the case that within the NSS the British government should set out its vision for the future of the United Kingdom, put forward the ways in which this vision can be achieved and then present the Treasury with the bill. Whilst such an approach is appealing it ignores the basic dynamic between ends and means. Moreover, it is invariably those states that are on the rise that set out grand visions outlining the direction of travel where their government wishes to take.

8. By way of contrast, status quo states, such as the United Kingdom, tend not to have a vision defined in terms of maintain their relative position. As a consequence, they emphasise values and ideas as a mechanism maintaining their existing standing and would prefer no change. As the world's first industrial nation and with its legacy of empire and relative standing successive British governments have found themselves in a position in which the United Kingdom has a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, a significant voice within NATO and the European Union, membership of the G-8 group of nations, leading member of the Commonwealth and so forth. It makes little sense to aspire to a diminished position as the United Kingdom's relative position is overtaken by rising nations such as India. Moreover, there is an argument that to articulate a position of relative decline is to hasten change.

9. This is not to say that this is the only option. In their article 'Brown Britain: post-colonial politics and grand strategy' Tarak Bakawi and Shane Brighton<sup>53</sup> argue that this narrative reflects a particular view of the United Kingdom and that there is the choice to move away from this. However, such a move is unappealing for most politicians because it raises too many awkward questions. First, it raises the question who or what the United Kingdom is. As the Scottish vote on independence and the number of British citizens who have gone to Syria in support of Islamic state have demonstrated, there isn't a single view of the United Kingdom and the United Kingdom's current demographic outlook suggest that this will continue to change. Second, no Prime Minister wants to be remembered as the one who oversaw a step change down in the United Kingdom's standing on the international stage. This is why successive Prime Ministers have supported the retention of a nuclear capability knowing full well that the replacement costs will fall to their successors.

10. Therefore the next NSS will continue with the traditional emphasis of maintaining Britain's place in the world, maintaining international order and freedom of trade. The only difference that any change in government will bring will focus on how this view is articulated. Liberal interventionism is clearly out and a new strap-line is needed. Similarly, the risk based approach adopted in 2010 retains credibility and therefore looks as though it will not change. Instead the logic next step is to ensure that the next SDSR more closely follows the risk-based approach and the loose interpretation of the force elements required to support this is likely to come into question.

11. The economy is now recovering with gross domestic product passing its 2008 figure this year. However, as *The Economist* highlighted recently, this recovery has not been matched

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<sup>53</sup> Tarak Bakawi & Shane Brighton, 'Brown Britain: post-colonial politics and grand strategy', *International Affairs*, vol.89, no.5, September 2013, pp.1109-23.

by improvements to the nation's finances.<sup>54</sup> In 2010 George Osborne proposed to close the deficit, then 11% of GDP – within five years. Unfortunately he is only two-fifths of the way there and the fault had been blamed on slow growth. However, the British economy is now the fastest growing amongst the G7 countries but this growth has not been matched by increases in tax revenue, particularly income tax. This means that the next government will face a challenging 2016 Spending Review with significant pressure to cut public spending still further. Both the Chancellor and the Shadow Chancellor's speeches at their respective party conferences emphasised that the debt issue still needed to be tackled. The difference between these revolved around whether the actual deficit or structural deficit should be the basis for calculating the requisite cutbacks. With the Health and International Development budgets likely to be protected, the desired cost savings are likely to focus on the defence and social security budgets.

12. Naturally defence does not agree that it should bear further cuts. However, the language the current government have used so far allows means that defence can be cut. Even the NATO member's goal of defence budgets reaching 2% of GDP applied only to those who are currently below this level. This means that the United Kingdom can continue to let defence spending as a percentage of GDP continue to fall. The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced further reductions to the defence budget as part of the autumn 2012 budget statement and the National Audit Office has noted that if these revised figures for defence are used as the basis for the promised 1% increase in the equipment budget then there is a £15.874bn deficit in the planned 10-year defence equipment programme.<sup>55</sup>

13. The big debate will therefore centre on the ways in which these Ends can be achieved given the economic constraints that beset the United Kingdom. To this end, the next government will inevitably continue to emphasize the importance of partners. The United Kingdom has a long history of partnerships and alliances and a future government is unlikely to want to chart a more unilateral path. Such partnerships help provide underpin the United Kingdom's relative place in the world and its standing.

14. Given current events in Ukraine and Syria, NATO looks like it will remain a central pillar of British defence and security policy. Similarly, the Five Eyes partnership of the Anglo-Saxon nations looks set to remain a key global partnership. The UK's future role within the European Union looks less settled. Here domestic politics, particularly the rise of UKIP, is likely to influence the next government's view of the EU irrespective of whichever political party(ies) forms the next government. If a referendum is held on the United Kingdom's continuing membership of the European Union then there will be a good deal of uncertainty, at least in the short term, and it will be interesting to see whether the next government is prepared to let Britain's potential exit from the European Union to appear on the National Risk Register. Whether the emphasis with France will remain is questionable. The reality is that the United Kingdom has a series of bilateral as well as multilateral partnerships and these look set to remain in place. Moreover, the United Kingdom is likely to continue to try and establish ever closer relations with new and old partners that provide for an increased global presence for the United Kingdom.

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<sup>54</sup> 'The tax-free recovery', *The Economist*, vol.412, no.8905, 20-26<sup>th</sup> September 2014, p. 31.

<sup>55</sup> National Audit Office, 'Ministry of Defence: Equipment Plan 2013 to 2023', *HC.816*, (London, TS), 2014), p.25.



### Way ahead

15. The biggest problem the United Kingdom confronts is uncertainty. In Don Rumsfeld's world the known, knowns are fairly clear. As events since 2010 have shown, the known, unknowns and the unknown, unknowns are far more problematic. This has been exacerbated by the speed of events and the ability for news and events to be posted around the globe. The next NSS and SDSR will therefore need to place far greater emphasis on horizon-scanning and knowledge development and retention. The focus will need to be on identifying trends and issues and the time frames in which the United Kingdom will need to respond. In other words, far more attention needs to be placed on the information gathering and analysis of government even at the expense of capability.

16. Following on from this the risk based approach should be taken to the next logic point where the capabilities, such as the armed forces, are defined more in terms of the timeframe and scale in which they are needed. This may well result in smaller numbers, particularly in the land environment, but with the ability to regenerate and reconstitute forces as necessary. This will require both a change in mind-set and also in the capacity of the national security secretariat.<sup>56</sup>

30 September 2014

### James Flint – written evidence

Written evidence submitted to the JCNSS on 30/09/2014 by James Flint, in a personal capacity, containing an argumentative component in synthesising security and aid strategy.<sup>57</sup>

## Investing in Defence: Security through Cooperation

### Executive Summary

- It is crucial to uphold extant international agreements, law and norms.
- 'Grand strategy' in security resource allocation must be proactive- not reactive.
- A credible (nuclear and conventional) deterrent is fundamental to continued UK state security, and is mandated by extant alliance commitments.
- Offensive military capability and the ability to project proportionate force is a requisite of coercive diplomacy, which is a fundamental implement of foreign policy.
- The UK's future power lies within ever closer economic and political union in Europe: Extant memberships and alliances must be fortified, inclusive of NATO and the EU.
- 'Soft power' must complement exertions of 'hard power', as a 'smart power'.

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<sup>56</sup> Paul Cornish and Andrew M Dorman, 'Fifty shades of purple? A risk-sharing approach to the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review', *International Affairs*, vol.89, no.5, September 2013, pp.1183-1202.

<sup>57</sup> This summative submission is forwarded from the perspective of a PhD researcher in International Relations (with research specialisms in Security and Foreign/Overseas Aid). However, it also draws upon the practical experience of serving in Afghanistan on Operation Herrick. Its contents are submitted in the hope of expanding upon understanding of how National Security Strategy may be synthesised with aid policy, assistance and cooperation. Supporting factual information is derived from academic literature and historical precedent.

- As a naval power in an uncertain world, the RN requires significant investment to ensure continued expeditionary capability, redundancy and interoperability.
- A significant portion of the aid budget should be allocated to foremost the RN, and secondly the Army, in order to facilitate enhanced humanitarianism.

### Recommendations

- Develop grand strategy which is proactive towards the UK's interests- not reactive.
  - Upload the UK's values and norms into supranational EU foreign policy discourse.
  - Allocate a significant portion of the aid budget towards strengthening the RN, for humanitarian as well militaristic ends.
1. This submission succinctly presents an argument calling for the maximisation of extant memberships and alliances, such as the EU and NATO, in order to further the UK's security. It further calls for greater coherence and synthesis between the UK's soft and hard power capabilities in the pursuit of grand strategy.
  2. It is crucial to uphold extant international agreements, law and norms.
  3. Within the conduct of international politics and foreign policy, the international system of states does not hold a higher authority (see Hill, 2003; Hilsman, 1990). As a ramification, if state government's lack the courage to uphold extant international law and norms, these systems and frameworks effectively cease to exist. There exists a real and present risk that short-term and domestic pressures undermine long-term foreign policy commitments.
  4. A multitude of worrisome contemporary examples exist, such as with the failure of the Budapest Memorandum (after Ukraine relinquished its nuclear arsenal) to guarantee Ukraine's territorial integrity. This failure undoubtedly holds negative ramifications with regards to the regime on nuclear non-proliferation. Then there is the arguably weak response to Assad's use of chemical weapons, and with rhetorical red lines being crossed, where political rhetoric perhaps failed to be fully substantiated.
  5. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P, post-2001) principle is also being tested, with ongoing commitments in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and the underestimation of the Islamic State (ISIS). Furthermore, while democratisation is arguably progressing in Afghanistan, and with President Ghani having signed the Bilateral Security Agreement with the US, the commitment to required levels of assistance to Afghanistan remains questionable (see Flint, 2014). The failure to enforce international law and norms vigorously undermines resolve and sets a negative precedent
  6. 'Grand strategy' in defence resource allocation must be proactive- not reactive.
  7. The need for an 'overarching strategy' has been noted (JCNSS, 2014). However, this is hindered by 'party politics' and uncertainty over such colossal issues as referendums over Scottish and EU independence. But, without coherent strategy all foreign and security policy will be reactive in nature; the budget will be allocated in a reactive manner to circumstances, and thus enemies will hold the initiative.
  8. The word 'strategy' has itself arguably become watered-down through ubiquitous use. Strategy should entail a multitude of facets, including a targeted problem, objectives, plan, results and contingencies. As reference to seminal texts on understanding of strategy, such as Freedman (2013) and Luttwak (2001), make profoundly clear, strategy demands initiative. Defence resource allocation cannot

hold the initiative or purport to attain any future objectives if they are derived from perceived threats in a reactive manner alone.

9. It is less important as to whether ministries and departments such as the Ministry of Defence (MOD), Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) are organisationally independent or part of a greater whole (as Labour and Conservative governments traditionally differ over management of aid). However, they all need to be coherent in working towards the fulfilment of a common greater strategy.
10. A clear grand strategy removes the need for governments to micro-manage, through facilitating operational strategy, doctrine and beneath this tactics, techniques and procedures. Thus, the point of a grand strategy is not to know how to respond to events, but a consensus on courses of action whilst maintaining initiative. Long-term spending decisions cannot be conducted on anticipating what other powers are planning.
11. A credible (nuclear and conventional) deterrent is fundamental to continued UK state security, and is mandated by extant alliance commitments.
12. As Leon Trotsky purportedly said, “you may not like war, but war may like you!”. In what may be considered to be an inter-paradigmatic period, the UK cannot risk degradation of conventional or nuclear deterrent capability, or the industries which support them to function. As the outgoing Secretary General of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen observed, just five years ago the present behaviour of Putin’s Russia and the spread of ISIS were not fully predictable (Rasmussen, 2014).
13. Offensive military capability and the ability to project proportionate force is a requisite of coercive diplomacy, which is a fundamental implement of foreign policy.
14. With regards to military capability, expeditionary potential and deterrence go hand in hand, as the ability to project force may be necessary to deter a course of action. While the British Army has seen considerable deployments, the Royal Navy (RN) is the UK’s institution of excellence where it comes to projecting power. This isn’t just in terms of hard power and anecdotal evidence such as from the Falklands War of 1982, but also in humanitarian terms, and as a ‘latent’ power possessing a multitude of capabilities. The RN’s relief mission to the Philippines is a recent example of this.
15. It should be noted that the Royal Air Force (RAF) and the use of air-power in isolation is a non-strategy (Luttwak, 2001). The RAF, as the junior and least capable of the three armed services, should only be used to support the RN and Army. Inter-service rivalry must become a problem of the past; the pursuit of strategy must be attained. Standing armed force peculiarities such as with the RAF land force, the RAF Regiment, which performed so poorly in Afghanistan (HCDC, 2014; USDA, 2013) should be ended.
16. The UK’s future power lies within ever closer economic and political union in Europe: Extant memberships and alliances must be fortified, inclusive of NATO and the EU.
17. As the US ‘pivots’ towards Asia-Pacific, the UK must take up the slack and balance in Europe, from a position of inclusion and leadership. Legitimacy, strength and influence may be derived from greater consensus and alliance politics. The UK’s relative position within the international system will change (JCNSS, 2014). However, relative power need not significantly decline. Ever closer union within the EU is not a threat, but an opportunity. The UK may upload discourses and norms

into supranational levels of union, and so create positive futures for both the UK as a member state and the EU as a whole (see Howell, 2004).

18. Overlap and dualism between developing EU security and defence policy frameworks and a resurgent NATO needs to be coordinated, but should be fortified, not resisted. The UK's seat on the UN Security Council and within the G8 group of nations also should not be overlooked. However, the EU arguably holds most potential. It has already been noted how once UK engagement with EU supranational governance has engaged with uploading norms, the EU has become a more useful foreign policy avenue (Gross, 2009; Oliver and Allen, 2008). The UK need not prioritise Europe over the US or *vice versa*; the UK is in Europe, and the US is the Western Hegemon. The two are not mutually exclusive.
19. 'Soft power' must complement exertions of 'hard power', as a 'smart power' (see Wilson, 2008).
20. The UK has overtly championed soft power as a positive mode of influence within the international system, and commits to a significant aid budget. Aid may be conceptualised as an economic power (Hill, 2003) or a structural power (Holden, 2009). It has always been a mode of influence within foreign policy (CIA, 1965; Petřík, 2008). Whereas it may be argued that the 'European approach' to aid is for purely developmental and poverty reduction purposes, in contrast with the US's linking it with foreign policy (Natsios, 2006), development aid and the greater industry of development has produced questionable results and as such has been strongly critiqued (see Foreman, 2012, 2013; Glennie, 2008).
21. Soft power is arguably a façade without hard power behind it. The EU's reputation as a 'civilian power' should be operationalised to be supportive of hard power, through both developing foreign and security policy, and in coordination with NATO. Whereas, the UK should muster 'smarter' use of the aid budget as a mode of influence in support of British values and interests.
22. As a naval power in an uncertain world, the RN requires significant investment to ensure continued expeditionary capability, redundancy and interoperability.
23. Many historical themes of sea power still apply (see Redford and Grove, 2014). However, today there are vastly more ships operating. While numerous foreign navies are expanding in quality of technology and quantity of ships, the RN is advancing in technology but shrinking in ships. Despite a substantial defence budget, cuts to the RN have slashed the UK's deployable military power in real terms.
24. The RN remains the UK's most capable institution for exerting influence (through both hard power, and as a 'latent' power). In recent years it has become clear that the RN has become under-emphasised by government. Both manpower and ships have reduced to levels which are arguably insufficient to maintain required operations and commitments. The coming into service of two new aircraft carriers (HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales) is promising, but gaps remain.
25. Libya (2011) demonstrated the utility of aircraft carriers (in the service of France and Italy) (see Taylor, 2011). However, it should be reiterated that the application of air-power in isolation is a non-strategy (Luttwak, 2001). Furthermore, hindering political narratives such as those concerning 'boots on the ground' should be avoided. The lack of moral courage to deploy British soldiers/marines when needed cannot be a legacy of Blair's wars (see Dannatt, 2009).

26. A significant portion of the aid budget must be allocated to foremost the RN, and secondly the Army, in order to facilitate enhanced humanitarianism.
27. That NGOs and aid workers are neutral and transparent is a myth perpetuated by elements within the aid industry (Foreman, 2013). Amidst an expanded understanding of the security/development nexus and interrelationships between the securitisation of development strategies and under-development as correlating with insecurity (see Duffield, 2012; Ginty and Williams, 2009), there is a concerted need for the military to support humanitarianism. The peacekeeper is a humanitarian, whilst humanitarians frequently require force protection. In addition to the RN in the Philippines, the British Army Engineers establishing field hospitals to fight Ebola in Sierra Leone (DFID, 2014) is one of many examples where a robust military response can assist humanitarianism.
28. In conclusion, whereas it may be argued that the UK's perceived standing within the international system is in relative decline, the EU (and perhaps NATO) provides an opportunity to counterbalance this decline. Furthermore, greater synthesis between British hard power (foremost the RN) and soft power (foremost the aid budget and humanitarianism) provides scope for enhanced 'smart' power and relative influence as a whole. However, the UK's accumulative apparatus of influence must find greater coherence amongst themselves in the pursuit of grand strategy, while UK governance must work towards the uploading of British values and norms into the supranational EU foreign policy discourse. The UK must be a leader within Europe, not a follower or outsider. UK government must possess the moral courage to act in the promotion of the UK's values and interests.

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### 30 September 2014

#### The Foundation for Information Policy Research

The Foundation for Information Policy Research (FIPR) is an independent body that studies the interaction between information technology and society. Its goal is to identify technical developments with significant social impact, commission and undertake research into public policy alternatives, and promote public understanding and dialogue between technologists and policy-makers in the UK and Europe.

FIPR has the following comments to make in response to the questions asked by the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy in its call for evidence of July 24th. It appears logical to tackle the questions in reverse order.

1. We welcome the committee's question of how broadly 'national security' (NS) should be defined. For many years, it has been used as a universal get-out clause. The Court of Appeal remarked that it is a protean concept, 'designed to encompass

the many, varied and (it may be) unpredictable ways in which the security of the nation may best be promoted'. Secretary of State for the Home Department v Rehman [2003] 1 AC 153.

2. Yet the ECHR and the case law flowing from it make clear that NS exemptions must be proportionate, necessary and predictable in their effects, while some prohibitions (such as that on torture) may not be overridden under any circumstances. We suggest that a good starting point is the Johannesburg Principles, as elaborated in the Article 19 discussion at <http://www.article19.org/pages/en/national-security-more.html>.
3. The Article 19 discussion notes that one of the main roles of the state in a post-imperial age is to act as a guarantor of human rights. It points out that NS restrictions, even in democratic countries, are often 'impermissibly vague or respond to statements which pose only a hypothetical risk of harm, making them ideal instruments of abuse to prevent the airing of unpopular ideas or criticism of government.'
4. The Scottish referendum underlines its argument that national unity is better safeguarded by democratic process, and that NS should only be invoked when the threat to unity comes from force or the threat of force. It should not be invoked for local or isolated threats to law and order.
5. It is also argued by the security and intelligence agencies, when lobbying for an enhanced role in protecting critical national infrastructure, that the state also acts as an insurer of last resort. When banks started to fail in 2008, voters looked to the Government to do something, and the same would be the case if a network-based attack were to take down the National Grid, or a computer worm to break the Internet.
6. But it does not follow from this that protecting all manner of (mostly privately-owned) infrastructure from sabotage should come within the definition of NS, even where such crimes could be of sufficient consequence to have a material effect on the economy.
7. The Security Service Act 1989 says that the service's function shall be [1(2)] the protection of national security and, in particular, its protection against threats from espionage, terrorism and sabotage, from the activities of agents of foreign powers and from actions intended to overthrow or undermine parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means [1(3)] to safeguard the economic well-being of the United Kingdom against threats posed by the actions or intentions of persons outside the British Islands [1(4)] to act in support of the activities of police forces, the National Crime Agency and other law enforcement agencies in the prevention and detection of serious crime.
8. The prevention of crimes such as sabotage of the National Grid is thus clearly seen as a national security mission only if the attack is performed by a foreign government (in which case it falls under 1(2)). Sabotage by non-state actors falls under 1(3) if they are outside the UK and 1(4) if they are domestic extremists.
9. The recent history of such attacks ranges from the attempt by PIRA to blow up three of London's supergrid substations in 1996, to more recent occupations of generating plant and other sites by environmental activists. In every case, the attackers were domestic.

10. The Intelligence Services Act 1994 similarly sets out a threefold purpose for SIS in 1(2), namely national security, economic well-being, and supporting the prevention and detection of serious crime.
11. These issues have been discussed extensively by Parliament, not just during the passage of the above Acts but also in the debates on the Interception of Communications Act 1985 and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. Ministers have assured Parliament that although boundaries are difficult to draw, the engagement of the national security apparatus should be restricted to serious matters (E.g. Lord Bassam of Brighton HL Deb, 12 June 2000, c1496).
12. This settled disposition is now being challenged by two facts. First, critical infrastructure in Britain and elsewhere is becoming dependent on networked computer systems, and the protection of systems for electricity, water, communications, financial services, and even healthcare – against even petty crime – are becoming a matter of information security mechanisms as well as of the more traditional physical security.
13. Second, GCHQ's protective arm, CESG, has been designated the National Technical Authority for cybersecurity, putting it in pole position for advising not just the military and intelligence communities but also the full range of civil government departments. Thus we find CESG managers and experts involved in setting security policy for smart meters at DECC; advising the DoH on acceptable mechanisms for the anonymisation of health records; instructing the DWP how to go about authenticating people who lodge welfare claims online; and telling the Bank of England and other financial regulators what should be considered acceptable resilience in financial networks.
14. This represents an enormous expansion of the scope and scale of national security activities, and is objectionable on quite a number of grounds.
15. First, there is competition. Britain has many information security firms who would love to advise government departments on how to protect their systems, ranging from the big international consultancies down to small specialists. Why is the (Conservative-led) Government engaged in a creeping nationalisation of this industry?
16. Second, there is quality. Good security engineering tends to build on a deep understanding of the tradecraft of the application area; for example, banks know quite a lot about payment fraud, while DWP has a lot of experience of people trying to fiddle benefits and HMRC understands carousel fraud against the VAT system.
17. Third, there is resource. Both the Security Service and GCHQ are small, and must perforce focus on major threats. As a result, GCHQ's work on smart meter security tackles only those threats that might bring down the grid (for example, by switching millions of meters off remotely) rather than the much more numerous and diverse threats from routine criminal activity (householders stealing electricity by manipulating meters, energy companies defrauding customers or colluding to commit competition offences).
18. The national security apparatus is not in a position to take over, or even to coordinate and supervise, the work of all the UK's police forces and regulators. In fact, while the law give the agencies the role of supporting the police in investigating serious crime; it wisely does not grant them any role in crime prevention at all.



19. Fourth, there is openness, which is an ideal in engineering as almost everywhere else. National security is frequently used as an excuse for companies to entrench monopolistic abuses. To take just one example, suppliers of railway locomotives and signalling equipment in the UK increasingly escape the EU “right to repair” rules by keeping key technical documentation secret from their customers, using national security as an excuse. Vendors can thus low-ball supply contracts in the knowledge that they can make more money out of maintaining a train, over its lifetime of 30–40 years, than from the initial sale. This ends up costing us real money, both as railway users and as taxpayers.
20. The extension of ‘national security’ to larger and larger parts of the UK infrastructure will multiply the opportunities for abuses of this kind, and help entrench monopolies and oligopolies that not only impose direct economic costs but also impede innovation.
21. Innovation requires open platforms on which market entrants can build new products that leverage existing infrastructure. For example, YouTube built a business starting in February 2005 and in October the following year sold the firm to Google for \$1.65bn. This was possible because there were already hundreds of millions of people with PCs and broadband connections who could download and enjoy video clips. By comparison, the smart meter deployments made so far (for example, in Ontario, Italy and Spain) are locked down, so third-party developers cannot write applications that use their data. In consequence, the hoped-for market in energy service firms that would offer innovative energy-saving advice to consumers has simply not happened (and the UK smart meter programme, advised by CESG, looks set to go the same way).
22. Sectors that fall under the national security umbrella have many other factors that impede innovation. For example, if suppliers need staff with security clearances, this creates a catch-22 where a new market entrant can’t get a sponsor for the clearance process until they have a customer, but can’t get a customer until they have a clearance. There are also serious issues with nationality, as the UK does not produce anything like enough software engineers and in consequence most of the staff at tech startups are foreign. Adding clearance costs to the existing costs and uncertainty of visas is a good way to steer entrepreneurial small companies away from a sector.
23. In short, the locked-down national-security mindset is incompatible with the open standards, interfaces, labour markets and platforms required to support innovation in the information age.
24. It is therefore of grave concern that current policies are drifting towards incorporating much of the UK’s infrastructure into a national security framework.
25. This is starting to affect one sector after another. Financial regulators, for example, pressure banks to hire former intelligence agency staff and CESG-approved security consultants to do penetration testing, with the result that the agencies not only learn a lot more than they perhaps need to about financial systems’ vulnerabilities, but a clique of their former staff establish unjust market power in security consultancy. The same regulators neglect their proper duty of ensuring that victims of financial fraud are made whole. This is the same pattern seen in the smart metering project (and elsewhere).

26. There is a clash of incentives: for example, ‘security’ means different things for a bank and a bank customer. Their goals are in conflict, and the proper government body to arbitrate them is not an intelligence agency but a financial regulator or a court of law.
27. There is also a clash of cultures: the missions of ‘national security’ and consumer protection are also in conflict, as the latter requires openness.
28. Even national security itself may be compromised. Will agency staff be motivated to reduce risks, or merely to maximise compliance? As more and more firms in the security industry feel it prudent to get former senior agency staff (or ministers) on their board of directors, will rent-seeking cloud perceptions of the national interest at the policy level?
29. The protection of civilian infrastructure, such as the railways, the banks, the NHS, the utilities and the Internet itself, should not therefore be primarily regarded as a national security matter. The national-security apparatus may have some role to play (in respect of possible hostile state action) but its role must never be the leading one. It must be limited to that which is proportionate and necessary, leaving appropriate responsibilities to the companies’ directors, to the regulators and to the police.
30. Moving now to the earlier questions in the consultation, we doubt that a twenty-year planning horizon is appropriate for the digital aspects of national security. While the product cycle of warship and warplane builders may be fifteen years, the computer industry’s is more like 15 months. Looking back at 1994, IBM dominated the industry; the Internet was an academic ghetto, used by mathematicians to exchange learned papers; Microsoft’s market capitalisation was only \$20bn; and firms like Google and Facebook had not even been founded. (Mark Zuckerberg was only ten years old.)
31. The emphasis should not be “Should the UK plan to maintain its global influence?” but “How will the UK continue to prosper in a globalised world, where we are no longer in a position to set the terms of trade?”
32. We must make policy for the twenty-first century, not hanker for the nineteenth.

September 27th 2014

Dr Jamie Gaskarth – written evidence

Background on contributor:

Dr Jamie Gaskarth is Associate Professor in International Relations at Plymouth University, and the convenor of the British Foreign Policy Working Group of the British International Studies Association. He is the author of *British Foreign Policy* (Polity Press, 2013) and editor/co-editor of *Rising Powers, Global Governance and Global Ethics* (Routledge, 2015); *British Foreign Policy and the National Interest* (Palgrave, 2014) and *British Foreign Policy: The New Labour Years* (Palgrave, 2011) as well as numerous academic articles on foreign policy and security. In 2011 he was a Visiting Research Scholar at the Center for British Studies, University of California at Berkeley.

Summary of main points:

- Identity is an important feature of any national security strategy.
  - There is a spectrum of ways of incorporating it into policymaking, from a bottom up strategy driven by public opinion to a top down approach imposed by elites.
  - A middle road of listening to public opinion whilst providing leadership when needed should be the default position of national strategy making.
  - However, identity has received only cursory attention from recent defence and security reviews.
  - There has been no concerted attempt to outline a particular British identity and gear security strategy to preserving and promoting this at home and abroad.
  - A series of current and future challenges mean that governments must pay more attention to identity and set out practical steps to incorporating public opinion into security strategy.
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1. Devising a national security strategy is difficult because the concept of security relates both to material factors, such as the physical safety of individuals and territory, as well as ideas, for instance, the values and institutions which are vital to maintaining community cohesion. At times these imperatives can come into conflict and tensions have to be resolved within the national community. In the process, security strategy very quickly turns to questions of national identity. What kind of a society are we attempting to secure? Could a plan to secure one aspect of our community, i.e. the safety of our citizens, end up threatening others, such as the values of tolerance or freedom of expression?
  2. Recent national security strategies and defence reviews have been criticized for not paying enough attention to British identity. According to a number of reports, if we do not think carefully about who we are, or want to be in world politics, then we can't set national goals and get public support to pursue them.<sup>58</sup>
  3. Adapting insights from the strategy literature<sup>59</sup>, there is a spectrum of ways identity can link to policy. At one end, policymakers could find out how British citizens perceive themselves and what kind of actor they would like the UK to be in the world. Policymaking would then be a matter of trying to act out this identity in the most efficient way possible.
  4. Alternatively, policymakers might have their own ideas about what kind of country they perceive Britain to be and how it should act. The challenge in this scenario would be to promote a British identity (that may have narrow elite origins) to the wider public and bring the attitudes of the mass of the British people in line with this perception.

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<sup>58</sup> House of Lords Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK's Influence, (2014) *Persuasion and Power in the Modern World* (London: TSO), HL150, 128-129 ; Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) (2012) *Strategic thinking in government: without National Strategy, can viable government strategy emerge?* (London: TSO), HC1625; PASC, (2010) *Who does UK National Strategy?* (London: HMSO), HC 435.

<sup>59</sup> In particular, Freedman, L. (2013) *Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) who outlines strategy from above and below; Humphreys, A.R.C. (2014) 'From National Interest to Global Reform: Patterns of Reasoning in British Foreign Policy Discourse', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Early View, 10 June; Jermyn, S. (2011) *Strategy for Action* (London: Knightstone), 158-160.

5. In between would be a strategy that was sensitive to public attitudes and responsive to changes in public opinion but which also provided leadership when required – communicating the rationale for decisions whilst also garnering support for future policy directions.
6. The first approach is bottom up, reactive to prevailing beliefs and requires sensitive accumulation of understanding about what the public want. This might involve asking the public how they would like to see the UK using force abroad, what sort of defence spending and capabilities they would be willing to sustain, and who they would like to see Britain allying itself with. An extensive public consultation exercise, openly conducted with public forums, focus groups and other interactive mechanisms such as referenda would be just some of the ways of building up a picture of public attitudes. The Public Administration Select Committee has advocated ‘iterative polling’, in which a series of differently worded questions on the same theme are used to tease out public attitudes.<sup>60</sup>
7. The other end is top down, and requires either an indifferent public who are happy to leave defence and security to the government, or a concerted effort on the part of policymakers to convince the populace of the value of the particular identity they favour. This approach sees security strategy as about providing leadership and assumes a greater wisdom on the part of officials. To be sustainable this identity has to be set out in detail and its continuing relevance and usefulness underlined. However, leaders will have to forge strategy in the public interest, even in the face of public opposition, at times<sup>61</sup>.
8. Strategies that seek a middle road require the most time and effort as they have to adapt to changes in public attitudes, have an acute understanding of the global context and potential challenges as well as knowing when and how to act. However, they should be the default position for policymakers since they combine the benefits of public awareness and support with the opportunity to provide leadership according to necessity.
9. In any case, to be sustainable, policies have to move towards the middle of the spectrum over time. Top down approaches must ensure that the public has bought into the strategy or they begin to crumble. Meanwhile, bottom up approaches require leaders to be prepared to make bold decisions at times, and have the

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<sup>60</sup> PASC (2013) *Engaging the public in National Strategy*, Fourth Report of Session 2013–14 (London: TSO).

<sup>61</sup> There are negative examples of the first two approaches in history. Disarmament and appeasement policies in the 1930s were arguably following public opinion in line with the first, bottom up approach. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 was an example of a top down effort to convince a sceptical public of the need to act in a certain way to be an influential actor and reliable ally. There are also positive ones, such as the decision to join the European community – a top down effort – and public charitable efforts such as Live Aid and Live 8 which led to increased aid spending from the bottom up.

courage to see policies through when public support has waned as the costs begin to bite.

10. The absence or limited space for discussion of British identity in recent defence and security strategies implies that policymakers have failed to embrace any of these approaches. The public is rarely consulted about defence or security matters. There has been no referendum on Trident renewal. In the past, public subscriptions were raised to fund military ships and aircraft but this public engagement with defence spending has ended. Chatham House polling has revealed a split between the attitudes of the general public and those of elites about the kind of identity the UK should have in the world.<sup>62</sup> However, the government has not responded by considering what this means for future security policy. This is problematic as polling data during the interventions in Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan revealed significant public opposition to British involvement.<sup>63</sup> A lack of public support can have major impacts on how wars are fought and therefore the likelihood of success.
11. As many commentators have noted, successive governments have failed to provide a coherent explanation of their view of British identity and how this relates to security matters. Efforts have been made to convince the public about security threats, especially from terrorism. There are also governmental efforts to justify the use of force abroad – usually only at the point of action. But there has been no concerted attempt to outline a particular British identity and gear security strategy to preserving and promoting this at home and abroad.<sup>64</sup>
12. In many ways, this is a very British approach to policymaking. Identity is the kind of abstract concept that empirically-minded British officials traditionally did not like to ponder. However, in recent years policymakers have shown a sophisticated grasp of concepts like complexity, risk, globalization, resilience, among others. It is time that identity was also considered as an important factor in security strategy.
13. Identities are often multi-faceted and this can lead people to question how far any agreement is possible on what Britishness is and how it is best protected. To achieve consensus, policymakers can sometimes fall back on expressing very basic principles such as fair play, the rule of law, liberty, or democracy; values that few states in the world would not claim as their own. Alternatively, they set British identity in opposition to an 'other' such as Europe, which can have hugely damaging diplomatic

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<sup>62</sup> Chatham House/You Gov (2012) 'British Attitudes Towards the UK's International Priorities' London: ChathamHouse, available at: [http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Europe/0712ch\\_yougov\\_survey\\_0.pdf](http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Europe/0712ch_yougov_survey_0.pdf); Chatham House-YouGov Survey (2010) 'British Attitudes Towards the UK's International Priorities', 2 July, (London: Chatham House).

<sup>63</sup> Reifler, J., Clarke, H. D., Scotto, T. J., Sanders, D., Stewart, M. C. and Whiteley, P. (2014), 'Prudence, Principle and Minimal Heuristics: British Public Opinion Toward the Use of Military Force in Afghanistan and Libya', *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 16: 28–55. See also Gaskarth, J. (2013) *British Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Polity Press), 78.

<sup>64</sup> Initiatives such as the citizenship test, which does promote a particular British identity, are not connected with foreign or security policy and only relate to a small subsection of the population.

consequences.<sup>65</sup> This can lead to confusion when policymakers disparage a state such as France at one moment only to embrace them as defence partners in the next.

14. Elsewhere, I have suggested that more of an effort could be made to steer foreign and defence policy towards a coherent sense of British identity connected with its role in the world.<sup>66</sup> Even if this is seen as too restrictive, the current tendency to consider identity only when policymakers are looking for support to act makes such appeals seem opportunistic. To ensure that the public will buy into the next national security strategy, it must address identity and consider how the UK will respond to future risks in light of how the community sees itself – and is seen by others – before crises emerge.

15. This is made more vital considering the following features of the current security context in which identity dilemmas are paramount:

**16. Austerity**

Restrictions on public spending will continue into the next parliament. This will create further pressure on defence and security budgets. There is likely to be even more public scepticism about military actions that do not directly relate to the security of the British mainland.

**17. Internal fragmentation**

The Scottish referendum hints at divergent views of Britain that have to be managed. Immigration has also had the dual effect of increasing the sense of connection between Britons and wider international society whilst leading to dissent over British intervention abroad.

**18. Elite vs public split**

As mentioned above, the general public has a more circumscribed idea of Britain's role in the world than elites. Either elites will have to change their assumptions or they must try and connect with the public and convert them to their point of view.

**19. Relative decline**

The coming decades will see further decline in Britain's relative power. The question is whether rising powers would support an assertive British identity in the future. If not, the UK must devise an alternative image of the country to maintain influence.

**20. Europe**

The most fundamental strategic challenge to British security is its relationship with the EU. If policymakers are to achieve support for reform among other EU members, they will have to project an image of Britain as a committed and integral member of the EU. Yet, all the public rhetoric has been in the opposite direction. In the current climate, no significant effort has been expended to promote the European aspects of British identity and so it is little wonder that the public feels little connection with its political institutions. If a future government wishes to leave the EU, it will need to

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<sup>65</sup> This was noted in Linda Colley, (1991) *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico), 6.

<sup>66</sup> Gaskarth, J. (2014) 'Strategizing Britain's role in the world' *International Affairs*, 90,3, 559-581.

consider what effect that will have on British identity at home and abroad and counter negative images with positive ones.

## **21. Conclusion**

22. What this discussion points to is the need to engage in a fundamental reappraisal of British identity. Any security strategy that purports to be national has to engage with the public, consider their views and be seen to take them on board.
23. Where leaders wish to challenge these attitudes, they have to be more deliberate about explaining their rationale and critiquing alternatives. The days when British identity could be taken for granted are over. Britain is a more diverse and democratic place than in previous centuries and its populace are less deferential on security and defence matters. To gain public support for the financial expenditure and human cost of warfighting, and security policy more broadly, its elites have to connect decisionmaking to British identity in a way that will resonate with the public.
24. That means that the next National Security Strategy needs to make a commitment to gauge public opinion and respond to it in its policymaking, as well as setting out practical mechanisms for doing so.

## Global Sustainability Institute – written evidence

1. This evidence is written on behalf of the Global Sustainability Institute (GSI), part of Anglia Ruskin University. GSI is an interdisciplinary research institute, including both natural and social scientists, concerned with a wide range of sustainability issues.
2. One of the major projects currently being carried out by the Institute is the Global Resource Observatory. We are drawing on the work of that project in this evidence. In particular, we base many of our comments on our publication ‘Country Resource Maps’ (2014), a copy of which will be sent to the Committee.

### **The scope of the National Security Strategy**

3. Although military defence must clearly be an important part of any nation’s security arrangements, we regard the view that national security is simply a matter of preparing for the possibility of military threats as dangerously out-dated, unimaginative, and unrealistic. The range and scope of the NSS is the most important aspect which needs to be clarified.
4. In our opinion, the drawing up of a UK National Security Strategy should begin from an assessment of global trends and risks. We have in mind something like the US Government’s National Intelligence Council reports, such as ‘Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds’ (2012). On the basis of such an assessment, it would then be possible to review each significant risk to UK security, considering the means by which security might be safeguarded or through proactive engagement the risk reduced. This would include military options, but also consideration of changes to UK domestic policy, foreign policy, and international agreements. Priority within this process should obviously be given to the most significant potential risks to UK security. We outline below what we believe these to be.

### **The biggest threat to UK security: climate change**

5. The most important current threat to UK national security is global climate change. This is affecting not only the UK itself, through for example changes in weather patterns and flooding, but also the international context in which the UK operates. Global climate change is certain to exacerbate conflict in many parts of the world in which the UK has an interest, change patterns of food production, and increase the already growing numbers of environmental refugees, for example from Bangladesh.

6. The UK should respond to this not only by preparing to adapt to climate change within the UK, for example through reinforcing flood defences, but also through playing a leading role in international climate change negotiations, and in the actions necessary to back this up. Above all, this must include a transformation in UK energy policy, anchored in a transition away from fossil fuels, through the increased use of renewable energy and energy efficiency, along with change in the way energy is used in transport, buildings, industry, and food production.

7. In terms of international relations, this implies close working with EU partners, a willingness to support the deployment of low-carbon technology in developing countries, and a reduction in reliance on alliances with oil-producing countries such as Saudi-Arabia. One consequence would be to reduce the incentive for the UK to take part in military intervention in the Middle East for energy security reasons, making possible a shift towards giving greater priority to human rights concerns.

### **Economic threats to UK security**

8. Global inequality is undoubtedly a major cause of resentment, desperation, and conflict. The world would be a more peaceful place, and the UK more secure, if inequality could be reduced from its current extremes. Extremist ideology is often itself a response to extreme circumstances and a deeply-felt perception of injustice. The UK overseas aid programme has a role to play here, but it should be reinforced by policies for fair trade, company law reform to ensure that UK companies are accountable for their actions overseas, action to clamp down on tax havens, and reforms designed to restrain the more dysfunctional aspects of the finance system.

9. The drawing up of a UK National Security Strategy should also consider the distribution of the world's natural resources, such as metals, fuels, food, land, and water, and the potential for insecurity as a result of the risk of resource pressures and shortages. This should guide not only military defence policies, but also trade policy and programmes for enabling resource substitution to take place where necessary. We urge the UK Government to support the EU programme of work on resource efficiency, and to help ensure that this is continued by the new Commission.

10. In particular, evidence gathered by the UK-US Taskforce on the Impact of Extreme Weather to UK/US Food System Resilience, supported by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, which will report in 2015, should feed into the 2015 UK National Security Strategy.



11. The dependence of the UK and world economy on natural resources is a major focus of the work of the Global Sustainability Institute. The report which we are sending, 'Country Resource Maps', sets out some of the relevant data, including data on water, food, and fuel. We believe that data such as this – which the UK Government is clearly in a position to elaborate in far more detail – should be made an important part of the basis for the next National Security Strategy.

## **Conclusion**

12. The next National Security Strategy should be the first of a new type, aligned with the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, in which military threats to security are considered alongside major global trends and threats such as climate change, resource scarcities, and extreme economic inequality. This approach will require the Strategy to draw on a wider range of analysis, and bring in a wider range of stakeholders, government departments, and policy areas, than has been the case with previous such strategies.

Institute for Conflict, Co-operation and Security, University of Birmingham – written evidence

## **Preface**

1. The University of Birmingham has recently held a number of Policy Commissions. The most recent of these was *The Security Impact of Drones: Challenges and Opportunities for the UK* and was chaired by Sir David Omand, former UK Security and Intelligence Coordinator, and a former Permanent Secretary of the Home Office and Director of GCHQ. The Commission explored the challenges and opportunities that Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) technology – both commercial and military – are likely to pose for current and future UK governments. Beyond the controversies surrounding the US use of armed RPA as part of their counter-terrorist cross-border campaigns, the Commission considered the wider impact of the new technology on warfare, national security and public safety, and the implications for UK public policy in a national, regional, and international context.

2. The writers of the current submission are the Academic Lead of the Policy Commission (Prof. Nicholas Wheeler), two members of the Commission (Prof. Stefan Wolff and Hon. Prof. Paul Schulte), and one of the Research Associates on the Policy Commission (Dr. Christopher Wyatt). All three are also currently working on an ESRC-funded project titled, *The Political Effects of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles on Conflict and Cooperation Within and Between States*.<sup>67</sup> The Report of the Birmingham Policy Commission was launched at the Royal United Services Institute on 22 October 2014.<sup>68</sup> Our evidence to this Committee is

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<sup>67</sup> More details on the project are available at the following link:

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/conflict-cooperation-security/Projects/Unmanned-Aerial-Vehicles/Projects.aspx>

<sup>68</sup> The Report is available at the following link: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/policy-commissions/remote-warfare/index.aspx>

going to focus on RPA-relevant aspects in relation to each question, but will contextualise them in relation to other, wider, issues.

**What should be the UK's national security priorities for the next twenty years, and how should these steer the next NSS?**

**The UK's place in the world**

3. The UK's significant place in the world is politically and historically complex and this will not be maintained without cost, risk, and difficulty. Much will depend upon the British public's attitude towards the risks and costs of an assertive national role in the world beyond the nation's simple demographic or economic rankings, and on national credibility within the international system, especially over membership of institutions such as the Security Council, NATO, and the EU. Satisfactory and effective engagement will not be achieved without concerted political will. An adequate NSS will therefore need to be fundamentally sensitive to the issues of explanation, resilience, and political sustainability which will arise from different choices in the security field.

4. The question has been posed as to whether a NSS can simultaneously accommodate reduced resources and increased burdens 'while at the same time asserting "no reduction in influence"'<sup>69</sup>, in light of the 'relative decline on the global stage'<sup>70</sup>. In our view, any NSS needs to consider the relevance of RPA and their systems. In many respects, they are instrumental in addressing this apparent disconnect. Remotely piloted and driven air, sea and land vehicles, combining features like over-watch and counter rocket, artillery and mortar (C-RAM) systems, and coupled with a high degree of automation in maritime and undersea craft and systems are just the sort of craft to be able to do more in situations of diminished resource. Moreover, they do so allowing for 'no reduction in influence' and power can continue to be projected where it is needed. RPA and other like ground and maritime vehicles also greatly facilitate the ability of the armed forces to react to emergencies as they occur.

5. The British position in the world *vis-à-vis* these units and their systems will continue to be bound by the exigencies of international humanitarian law (otherwise known as the law of armed conflict and international human rights law). It is likely that British attitudes to the employment of armed force in general will continue to be distinguishable from both that of the United States and Europe. But international practice over the kinetic use of RPAs may converge where a state has obtained an international mandate to save lives in humanitarian emergencies. Britain's use of these technologies overseas will continue to be in accord with UK judgements of international law, which will in some cases rest upon necessary UN mandates. Public differentiation of the British position from that of other powers, especially the United States, will be paramount and will have to be sensitively established. But we do not recommend an open breach and denunciation of US RPA strikes against terrorists within countries where governments have not formally consented to their operation. This is primarily because the US government is already aware of contrary UK interpretations of international law, and has numerous US experts already objecting to the legal and strategic

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<sup>69</sup> JCNSS, 2010: Paragraph 30.

<sup>70</sup> JCNSS, 2014: Paragraph 47.

consequences of US policy, while open British criticism would jeopardise shared defence equities, embarrass US regional allies friendly to the UK and involved to varying degrees in the US RPA counterterrorist campaign, and strengthen the Jihadi narrative.

6. The UK's role confers on it certain rights and responsibilities with regard to RPA and their systems, as with other matters. At the annual conference of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) in Geneva on 13 and 14 November, states have the opportunity to renew the CCW mandate and continue discussions in 2015 on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS). The recent decision by the UK Government to support renewal of the mandate has been applauded and will present a good opportunity for, as Tom Watson and others have put it, the UK 'Government to engage further and assume a leading role in securing a new international framework to address the concerns of LAWS. The UK's experience in arms control, the technology of precursor systems such as the Taranis, and diplomatic influence, place your Department [the FCO] in a unique position to take a leading role in a new international process, building on existing CCW work.'<sup>71</sup>

**Should the UK plan to maintain its global influence? Should we aim for a national consensus on the UK's future place in the world?**

### **Strategic choices**

7. As the JCNSS has put it: 'If the current strategy is not guiding choices then it needs to be revised'<sup>72</sup> and 'the National Security Secretariat should develop a methodology which enables the impact and likelihood of risks to be considered alongside the amount of government effort and resources that are being deployed to mitigate it'.<sup>73</sup> We agree that widely convincing methodologies are important, highly desirable but not necessarily attainable. We would particularly support enhanced research into the interactions between external intervention and internal radicalisation and terrorism, and the frequently asserted additional emotional "blowback" from factors such as cultural incompatibility and long range Western firepower in 'Wars among the People' in the Third World. Greater certainty here would be valuable both to guide and to publicly defend likely strategic judgements facing the UK. But we do not underestimate the sheer intellectual difficulty of establishing and measuring psychological causations.

8. In the increasingly complex situation facing all major international players there may simply be no convincing objective way of judging relative risks, opportunities, threats, dangers, second-order effects, and feedback factors, especially over 'debounced risks'<sup>74,75</sup>, such as wide spectrums of potential cyber-attack, deployment by terrorists of WMD on a catastrophic scale or the worst, interactive consequences of climate change, none of whose probability of occurrence and severity of outcome can be reliably predicted.

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<sup>71</sup> Letter from Tom Watson, Chair of the APPG on Drones, Admiral Lord West, Martin Caton, Chair of the APPG on weapons and protection of civilians, and Professor Sir David Omand to Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP, 17 November 2014, page 1.

<sup>72</sup> JCNSS, 2010: Paragraph 41.

<sup>73</sup> JCNSS, 2014: Paragraph 29.

<sup>74</sup> See, especially, Ulrich Beck - *World Risk Society* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1999)

9. The chances of achieving widespread national consensus over appropriate precautions and responses will consequently be low. Security choices will have to be made on the basis of governmental judgements which are not likely to be widely shared and will certainly have to be energetically explained and justified, both to the British public and to a Parliament which has shown itself to be somewhat sceptical over at least the overt use of force. To mitigate the potentially perverse consequences of this situation we think it is desirable that British governments, in and between National Security Strategies, should consciously, continuously and methodically explain the complexity and unavoidability of many of the threats facing the United Kingdom (and in the Birmingham Policy Commission report we have mentioned the issue of hostile use of RPA as an example of this). If this is not done, there will remain a strong structural incentive for Ministers to take exaggerated and suboptimal decisions over priorities for investment and political attention which reduce the personal criticism they would themselves face from failure to stop highly publicised, increasingly atrocious and shocking, but relatively small-scale events like terrorist attacks. There may be further perverse consequences if an over precise and prescriptive National Security Strategy, holding British politicians to individual account, were to lead to de facto prioritisation favouring the avoidance of eventually traceable and politically costly responsibility for lapses in UK internal security. This could come at some cost to efforts to maintain the more diffuse collective effectiveness of the NATO Alliance in relation to interstate (including proxy) conflict or tension.

10. For remotely piloted and highly automated systems, whatever the degree of national consensus in the security field, these systems will become increasingly integral to the cost-effective defence of the Realm and wider British interests.

11. This would not require a grand strategy for a tactical arm but it would mandate a strategic approach to RPA use in conjunction with other systems. For remotely piloted aircraft, systems might be general high level networking, such as C4ISTAR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance) as well as with allies, such as MAJIC2 (Multi-Intelligence All-Source Joint ISR Interoperability Coalition). Similar arrangements would likewise obtain for ground and maritime systems and their role will help inform strategic choices. The expense of developing new systems will be high, so there will be a continuing strategic imperative to find cost sharing collaborative arrangements with allies.

**How can the next NSS be made most useful in guiding decisions in Government and long-term spending decisions?**

### **International relationships**

12. We are again struck by the unrealism and undesirability of projecting any rigidly prescriptive National Strategy far ahead into an exceptionally unpredictable global situation. As the recently retired Head of the US Defense Intelligence Agency put it:

‘What I see each day is the most uncertain, chaotic and confused international environment that I’ve witnessed in my entire career... a period of prolonged societal conflict that is pretty unprecedented. In the Middle East, we’re starting to see issues

arise over boundaries that were drawn back in the post-colonial era following World War I. In some regions, we're seeing the failure of the nation-state, and...the disintegration of the [Westphalian] system of nation-states: a strategic landscape and boundaries on the global map changing right before our eyes. That change is being accelerated by the explosion of social media. And we in the intelligence community are trying to understand it all'.<sup>76</sup>

13. Against this background it seems essential to us that the next NSS should positively stress the need for plans and capabilities which would support strategic flexibility.

14. For RPA, the US Pivot to Asia and the role of the UK government in Europe are not the only factors which will need to be taken into account in future British decision making. The deteriorating security situations the Middle East and Africa are likely to be increasingly important. Given that the UK does not possess an active aircraft carrier and it does not possess a carrier-borne remotely piloted aircraft, and unmanned underwater vehicles are still in their infancy, Britain's contribution to any Pivot to Asia looks both manned and minimal. The RPA it has are better suited to operations in Iraq/Syria and Africa, where postcolonial states are in difficulty and where allies like America and France are also increasingly turning their attention.

#### **Which will be the UK's critical international relationships over the next 20 years?**

15. Britain's key international partners seem likely to remain the US and Europe and traditional allies. Bilateral relations with other states, within or on supply routes to conflict zones, are also likely to become more important, especially where remotely piloted aircraft are being deployed.

16. With regard to critical international relationships, it should be noted that bilateral relationships with France, Germany and Italy are important. These concern RPA development in a technological and procurement sense but also are important in terms of strategy, especially where the UK approach could be the centre-piece of an EU approach. This is particularly evident in the recent agreement with Dassault and other companies, where 'contracts worth £120 million have been awarded for the early phase of a development programme for unmanned combat air systems'.<sup>77</sup>

17. Other critical relationships exist with Russia and China. Although not allies, relations with these countries – in general with respect to the NSS and with respect to RPA more specifically – are going to need to be managed carefully, whether it is tensions in the Eastern Ukraine or cyber threats from the PLA (People's Liberation Army).

#### **How should the 2015 NSS handle the uncertainty over the UK's role in Europe?**

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<sup>76</sup> James Kitfield – 'Lieutenant-General Michael Flynn's Last Interview: Iconoclast Departs DIA With A Warning', *Breaking Defense*, August 07, 2014 <http://breakingdefense.com/2014/08/flynns-last-interview-intel-iconoclast-departs-dia-with-a-warning/>

<sup>77</sup> See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/120-million-anglo-french-defence-contract> for the latest position at time of writing.

18. There should be a robust threat assessment in the next iteration based upon whatever is the announced governmental strategy towards the EU and commitment to a referendum. Regardless of the questions of immigration and a referendum on Europe, we take the view that the NSS should make a strong case for the most effective possible links the EU to respond to threats with multiple economic, mass population movement, terrorism and military dimensions. Wherever achievable and appropriate, the UK should try to ensure that these European responses are evolved in association with NATO. For RPA, links with other European countries are essential for the UK's position. Co-operation in operations in Libya have demonstrated this, as has the recently-signed agreement for the development of RPA.

## **Risks and contingency planning**

**What are the main risks to the UK's national security? Is the Government's horizon-scanning effective, and are our national contingency plans adequate?**

19. The Joint Committee is 'concerned that in some areas the Government seems genuinely not to have any contingency plans. This is dangerous and unwise.'<sup>78</sup> The ability to do contingency planning is indispensable, but each individual contingency plan is manpower intensive and risks rapidly becoming irrelevant in circumstances of accelerating international change. So the Joint Committee's specific criticisms seem to us exaggerated.

20. However, while Cybersecurity is well addressed in the Strategy, we believe there should be more attention to wider Information War (in Russian terminology, Non-Linear, or Contactless, Warfare, though the Russians may not be its only practitioners), Hyper-connected electronic communication, in its propaganda as well as its technically disruptive aspects, is what Clausewitz might today have identified as a significant example of 'the other means' by which 'political intercourse' is continued into what can be called war. The increasingly intensive propagation of lies and propaganda permitted by electronic media will increase the probability of dissent within the UK political system over appropriate responses to inevitably disputable and ambiguous threats. As a Latvian Ambassador recently asked 'What does it mean for freedom and openness and the right of people to receive uncontrolled information [when] this open information space is penetrated by clear propaganda instruments, instruments of modern warfare?'<sup>79</sup> Maintaining Alliance or national cohesion under these conditions, while facing chaotic international developments and pervasive uncertainties about what is permitted under international law, will therefore be a strategic priority, and a problem in itself. It will be worsened if religious, diaspora or environmental discontents merge with resentments over growing inequalities in income, life prospects and employment security, blending into new narratives of disillusion, suspicion, and opposition to expensive security investments or resolute actions in support of British interests or Western values.

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<sup>78</sup> JCNSS, 2014: Paragraph 34.

<sup>79</sup> Ambassador Andris Razans, quoted in "Russia's Information War: Latvian Ambassador, Finnish Strategist Warn On Cyber" <http://breakingdefense.com/2014/06/russias-information-war-latvian-ambassador-finnish-strategist-warn-on-cyber/>

21. With regard to the utility of RPA and their systems, the main risks to the UK are unlikely to be conventional conflict. Instead, they are more likely to be Islamic Terrorism and cyber-related threats. Remotely piloted aircraft have a role in countering both, but could be seriously inhibited in those potential roles if delegitimised and demonised through internal British political dynamics, interacting with externally fostered propaganda.

22. This may well be especially problematic in the years covered by the 2015 National Security Strategy because the UK and its allies already face a strategic situation in which the paradigmatic escalatory intervention of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, large-scale transformative attempts at contested state building, has been tested by the strategic disappointments in Iraq and Afghanistan. In those theatres the much heralded Comprehensive Approach, using all aspects of national power by consortia of intervening countries, though perhaps necessary, has clearly been proven to be insufficient, at least in timescales which Western electorates are prepared to support. If commitments of Western boots on the ground are consequently no longer politically feasible, the two resultant alternatives are likely to be either or both upstream engagement with Low Income States under Stress, in development and Security Sector Reform, or limited, largely stand-off assistance if such states do find themselves facing insurgencies, employing special forces and air power, especially RPA.<sup>80</sup> Thus, in current circumstances where British ground troops will not be redeployed to Iraq, RAF Reapers, alongside manned aircraft, are now being used both for Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) to support Iraqi Security Forces and Kurdish armed organisations, and inside the borders of Iraq, direct kinetic attack against the forces of the so-called Islamic State.

23. To date, RPA have also helped forces on the ground find refugees and spot troop movements. They are also able to deter hostile action by their very presence and protect civilians against hostile forces. Indeed, the role of RPA in conflicts determined by the responsibility to protect (R2P), monitored by international organisations, is one which is increasing all the time, including with UN forces and the OSCE.

24. For more kinetic operations, the utility of RPA and their systems is through functionality like network degradation, striking the enemy, area denial, aerial interdiction, as a force multiplier and as force protection. Any consideration of the UK's role in overseas conflict would need to take these factors into account, especially in situations where risks to pilots could be removed.

25. The Government's horizon-scanning appears comprehensive in that strategies like Contest, Prevent and the Cyber Strategy cover those issues. Joint Doctrine Note 2/11 will continue to cover remotely piloted aircraft for the interim.<sup>81</sup> Each aspect could be seen to have been covered. Where national contingency plans might not be said to be always wholly adequate, importance lies in the uses of remotely piloted aircraft and other like systems in

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<sup>80</sup> Paul Schulte 'What We Do If We Are Never Going to Do This Again: Western Counterinsurgency Choices after Iraq and Afghanistan' in *The New Counterinsurgency Era in Critical Perspective* edited by Celeste Ward Gventer, David Martin Jones, and MLR Smith, (Palgrave Macmillan 2014).

<sup>81</sup> HCDC - *Remote Control: Remotely Piloted Airy Systems – current and future UK use: Government Response to the Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2013–14*, Sixth Special Report of Session 2014–15, HC 611, 29 July 2014, page 3.

dealing with threats like Islamic Terrorism and cyber-related issues. It strikes us that it is here that gains could be made, with cross-cutting and joined-up approaches.

26. With regard to resilience, we find that traditional understandings of target hardening, perimeter and entry point defence, with concomitant stand-off distances will have to be rethought with the new technologies available.

27. Looking at the question of the use of remotely piloted aircraft in the maintenance of internal law and order, we take the view that the National Police Air Service and the Association of Chief Police Officers should formulate a strategy for their use in such cases, along with a code of conduct governing their use.<sup>82</sup>

## Scope

### How broadly should the NSS define national security?

28. There is the concern that: 'We are not convinced that the Government gave sufficient attention in the NSS to the potential risks that future international economic instability might pose for UK security.'<sup>83</sup>

29. We agree that the economic position is crucially important, especially in view of the 'hyper- competition' which can be anticipated from China and other economies beyond Europe and North America. But since economic predictions do not command much reliability beyond a few months, horizon scanning, the systematic development of alternative options, and strategic flexibility of thinking will be increasingly important in the globally volatile economic system. Increasing all these UK capabilities should therefore be part of any enlightened UK strategy.

30. Regarding remotely piloted aircraft and their systems, it is essential that demonstrator programmes like the Taranis remain well-funded. For industrial research and development in the remotely piloted aircraft/systems sector, ring fencing and inflation proofing ought to be a key policy position. These measures would help insulate and cushion the sector against adverse shocks. Where this is less easy to guarantee, robust diplomacy underlying secure collaboration with allies remains essential. We consider a broad scope to be essential in identifying threats and strategizing our response to them.

Hon. Prof. Paul Schulte, Prof. Nicholas J Wheeler, Prof. Stefan Wolff, and Dr Christopher M Wyatt

12 November 2014

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<sup>82</sup> Birmingham Policy Commission Report on *The Security Impact of Drones*, Chapter 6  
<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/policy-commissions/remote-warfare/index.aspx>

<sup>83</sup> JCNSS, 2010: Paragraph 67.



### Executive summary

- Russia and other powers have exploited the West's lack of coherent strategic thinking since the end of the Cold War
- In an interconnected world with few boundaries left, British decision-makers and their national security "community" need a new mindset
- The UK, both within and outside NATO, must be able to fight the *right* kind of war — the one for global public opinion — even more than a military one
- Annexation of Crimea: what Western commentators have called a new kind of warfare is in fact the latest chapter in a 100-year-old playbook Russians call "active measures"
- Recent Russian security and intelligence budgets have grown annually by an estimated 15%-20%, with spending going to operations
- Between 2015 and 2017, Russia's overall (declared) budget for State-funded broadcasting will rise by more than 200%
- Russian reliance on strategic information operations will only grow, as military doctrine shifts emphasis from conventional battlegrounds to psychological and perception wars
- One of the greatest challenges NATO faces is how to prevent Russian State-controlled media from radicalising the Russian diaspora within its borders
- NATO leaders need to realise fully the opportunities and threats that information operations present, and devote adequate resources to address them
- There is a need for a true national security community that harnesses the enormous talents and power of British society at large

### Introduction<sup>84</sup>

1. Russia's annexation of Crimea and invasion of Ukraine's Donbas region have again exposed the West's lack of coherent strategic thinking following the end of the USSR. Especially since Vladimir V. Putin attained political office 15 years ago, Russian strategic information operations (IOs) have increasingly exploited Western political "short-termism" and relative retrenchment, subverting and paralysing decision-making.<sup>85</sup> Despite clear warnings like the 2007 cyber-attacks on Estonia,<sup>86</sup> and provocations triggering war with Georgia (2008)<sup>87</sup> and now Ukraine, some policy-makers in the West still think wishfully about Moscow's intentions towards former Soviet states.

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84 All views expressed are the author's own. With 15 years' experience in international security affairs in the public, private and academic sectors, he is also a historian of Russian subversion and intelligence. The Institute for Statecraft (IfS) is an independent body dedicated to refreshing the practice of statecraft, improving governance and enhancing national security.

85 Victor Madeira, 'Russian subversion — haven't we been here before?' *Statecraft Papers*, IfS, 30 July 2014 ([www.statecraft.org.uk/research/russian-subversion-havent-we-been-here](http://www.statecraft.org.uk/research/russian-subversion-havent-we-been-here)).

86 Chloe Arnold, 'Russian group's claims reopen debate on Estonian cyberattacks,' *Radio Free Europe* (RFERL), 30 March 2009 ([www.rferl.org/content/Russian\\_Groups\\_Claims\\_Reopen\\_Debate\\_On\\_Estonian\\_Cyberattacks\\_/1564694.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Russian_Groups_Claims_Reopen_Debate_On_Estonian_Cyberattacks_/1564694.html)).

87 European Union (EU), *Independent international fact-finding mission on the conflict in Georgia*, volume (vol.) I, September 2009, pages (pp.) 11, 31 ([http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFMCG\\_Volume\\_I.pdf](http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFMCG_Volume_I.pdf)).

2. This submission addresses how in an interconnected world with few boundaries left, IOs change the very essence of “national” security. In a world where a single Twitter message or YouTube video clip — genuine or otherwise — can instantly re-awaken (and manipulate) centuries-old feuds, British decision-makers and their national security “community” need a new mindset.

3. The July 2014 call for evidence listed seven questions (Q). This submission touches mainly on Q1 (*‘What should be the UK’s national security priorities for the next twenty years, and how should these steer the next NSS?’*) and Q7 (*‘How broadly should the NSS define national security?’*). But this evidence speaks also to Q3 (*‘How can the next NSS be made most useful in guiding decisions in Government and long-term spending decisions?’*) and Q6 (*‘What are the main risks to the UK’s national security?...’*).

### **The mind as *the* battlefield**

4. Events in Crimea and the Donbas prove the West cannot keep looking at “national” security primarily from a military hardware perspective. After the recent Wales summit, NATO statements on renewed commitment to Article 5 and higher defence spending were indeed encouraging, but misplaced. Russia and other revisionist powers like China (but also supposedly pro-West regimes like Turkey and Thailand, for example) increasingly use IOs to challenge Western narratives in the psychological realm while heavily censoring and violently suppressing domestic dissent.<sup>88</sup>

5. Though aimed at Western audiences also, Kremlin IOs target mainly Russian “hearts and minds”. Trapped in a cocoon of lies and “spin” that the West must pierce, average Russians have both the most to lose and to gain, and so are the best hope for stopping Moscow’s destabilisation of the former Soviet bloc. The UK, both within and outside NATO, must therefore be able to fight the *right* kind of war — the one for global public opinion — even more than a military one.

6. Given Russia’s revolutionary traditions and often-poor military readiness, armed conflict is a last resort. And when it is not, even then it is one of the final stages in the process of aggression.<sup>89</sup> When possible, Moscow has long preferred waging what Western commentators have mistakenly called a new kind of warfare since the March 2014 annexation of Crimea.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> BBC News China, ‘China “censors Hong Kong protest posts on social media”,’ 29 September 2014 ([www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-29411270](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-29411270)); Nathaniel Mott, ‘The year of digital blockades continues with China’s Instagram ban,’ *Pando*, 29 September 2014 (<http://pando.com/2014/09/29/the-year-of-digital-blockades-continues-with-chinas-instagram-ban/>).

<sup>89</sup> Janis Berzins, *Russia’s new generation warfare in Ukraine: implications for Latvian defence policy*, National Defence Academy of Latvia — Center for Security and Strategic Research, Policy Paper 02, April 2014, p. 6, (<http://www.naa.mil.lv/~media/NAA/AZPC/Publikacijas/PP%2002-2014.ashx>).

<sup>90</sup> In February 1927 HM Ambassador to Germany, Sir Ronald Lindsay, urged London to realise that short of military action against the USSR, Britain was fighting ‘a new kind of war’. Anti-subversive measures could not be gradual: they had to be part of a package of ‘economic boycott, breach of diplomatic relations’, as well as ‘propaganda and counter-propaganda’ and ‘pressure on neutrals.’ Victor Madeira, *Britannia and The Bear: the Anglo-Russian intelligence wars, 1917–1929* (Woodbridge: 2014), p. 159.

7. At its core, this mix of political, covert, economic and other activity is but the latest chapter in a 100-year-old playbook Russians call “active measures”.<sup>91</sup> Though modernised to exploit the speed and reach of 21<sup>st</sup>-century mass and social media, this playbook retains its basic aim: to influence behaviour, enabling the Soviet-era intelligence officers ruling Russia today to manipulate opponents. Active measures seem new to us now only because the West — which never fully came to grips with this challenge between 1917 and 1991 in the first place — allowed its Russia expertise to die away after the Cold War and forgot vital lessons along the way.<sup>92</sup>

8. Modern Russian IOs date back to Soviet “special propaganda”, first taught on its own in 1942.<sup>93</sup> Along the way, Moscow perfected the concept of reflexive control, essentially making opponents act as desired without them being aware of the Kremlin’s hidden hand.<sup>94</sup> Eventually, Soviet military doctrine regarded social revolution in enemy territories — precisely what Crimea and the Donbas have experienced — as victory.<sup>95</sup>

9. Moscow strategically exploits the volume and speed of modern communications to create alternate but quickly shifting realities, causing uncertainty and stopping free speech. A particularly effective method has been to blend traditional online “trolling” (i.e. abusive disruption) by people with the automated variety done by “bots”, or networks of computers.<sup>96</sup> The outcome is what one might call “shallow but deep”. Content in comments sections below articles remains shallow, with no real debate of inconvenient issues or facts,

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91 Active measures are ‘aimed at exerting useful influence on ... the political life of a target ... its foreign policy ... misleading the adversary, undermining and weakening his positions, [and] the disruption of his hostile plans.’ Vasily Mitrokhin, ed., *KGB lexicon: the Soviet intelligence officer’s handbook* (London: 2002), p. 13. Active measures are rooted in how Russian geography shaped Mongol warfare tactics and strategy. Flat Russian steppes provide virtually no natural cover/concealment, making active deception a vital element of any successful military operation. Jeffrey Malone, ‘Russian approach to information warfare,’ Australian Defence Force Academy, September 2014, slide 4 ([www.slideshare.net/jeffreymalone1/the-russian-approach-to-information-warfare](http://www.slideshare.net/jeffreymalone1/the-russian-approach-to-information-warfare)).

92 In the UK’s case, see Commons Defence Committee, *Towards the next Defence and Security Review: part two* — NATO, HC 358, 31 July 2014, pp. 35-36 ([www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmdfence/358/358.pdf](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmdfence/358/358.pdf)).

93 Jolanta Darczewska, *The anatomy of Russian information warfare: the Crimean operation*, Centre for Eastern Studies, Warsaw, 42, May 2014, p. 9 ([www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/the\\_anatomy\\_of\\_russian\\_information\\_warfare.pdf](http://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/the_anatomy_of_russian_information_warfare.pdf)).

94 Reflexive control is ‘a means of conveying to a partner or an opponent specially prepared information to incline him to voluntarily make the predetermined decision by the initiator of the action.’ Berzins, *Russia*, p. 7, footnote (fn.) 9.

95 Raymond W. Leonard, *Secret soldiers of the Revolution: Soviet military intelligence, 1918–1933* (Westport: 1999), p. 46.

96 The 2014 budget for a single one of these Russian “troll” groups is a reported £6 million. Max Seddon, ‘Documents show how Russia’s troll army hit America,’ *BuzzFeed*, 2 June 2014 ([www.buzzfeed.com/maxseddon/documents-show-how-russias-troll-army-hit-america](http://www.buzzfeed.com/maxseddon/documents-show-how-russias-troll-army-hit-america)). See also John Robb, ‘History will be written by the bots,’ *Global Guerrillas*, 6 August 2014 (<http://globalguerrillas.typepad.com/globalguerrillas/2014/08/history-will-be-written-by-the-bots.html>); Milan Lelich, ‘Victims of Russian propaganda,’ *New Eastern Europe*, 25 July 2014 ([www.neweasterneurope.eu/articles-and-commentary/1278-victims-of-russian-propaganda](http://www.neweasterneurope.eu/articles-and-commentary/1278-victims-of-russian-propaganda)); Catherine A. Fitzpatrick, ‘Here comes the Kremlin’s troll army,’ *The Interpreter*, 6 June 2014 ([www.interpretermag.com/14302/](http://www.interpretermag.com/14302/)); Chris Elliott, ‘The readers’ editor on... pro-Russia trolling below the line on Ukraine stories,’ *The Guardian*, 4 May 2014 ([www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/04/pro-russia-trolls-ukraine-guardian-online](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/04/pro-russia-trolls-ukraine-guardian-online)).

while the volume of Russian “trolling” quickly buries anti-Kremlin views so deep in a stream of nonsense that most readers never even see them.

10. The stakes will get even higher for the West in coming years. Recent Russian security and intelligence budgets have grown annually by an estimated 15%-20%, with spending going to operations (including IOs) and not line items like infrastructure, for example.<sup>97</sup> This aggressive and concerted espionage campaign is overwhelming NATO and EU counter-intelligence services.<sup>98</sup>

11. And between 2015 and 2017, Russia’s overall (declared) budget for State-funded broadcasting will rise by more than 200%. Funding for television network RT alone, perhaps Russia’s best-known outlet overseas, will rise from £191 million this year to £246 million in 2015. With nearly a 25% increase, RT will launch French- and German-language channels to target and influence core EU countries — and the Russian diaspora within them.<sup>99</sup>

12. By comparison, total combined income for BBC World Service and BBC Monitoring in 2013-14 was just over £255 million, down 14% from about £296.5 million in 2010-11.<sup>100</sup>

13. Some countries are finally trying to counter Russia’s IO offensive. Estonia, for instance, is to launch a Russian-language television station, ETV3. But with an annual budget of only £5 million and not likely to be running for another year,<sup>101</sup> ETV3’s impact will be minimal given that Moscow has such a head start. The USA has also reacted and, as part of the 2014 Ukraine Freedom Support Act enacted this month, Washington will commit just over £6 million annually for the next three years to counter Kremlin propaganda.<sup>102</sup>

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97 Private conversation.

98 See Michael Weiss, ‘In plain sight: the Kremlin’s London lobby,’ *The Interpreter*, 20 March 2013 ([www.interpretermag.com/in-plain-sight-the-kremlins-london-lobby/](http://www.interpretermag.com/in-plain-sight-the-kremlins-london-lobby/)); John Schindler, ‘Putin’s espionage offensive against France,’ *The XX Committee*, 2 August 2014 (<http://20committee.com/2014/08/02/putins-espionage-offensive-against-france/>); Andrew Rettman, ‘Belgian intelligence chief talks to *EUobserver*: transcript,’ *EUobserver*, 17 September 2012 (<http://euobserver.com/secret-ue/117554>); Fidelius Schmid and Holger Stark, ‘Spies strain German-Russian ties,’ *Der Spiegel*, 2 July 2013 ([www.spiegel.de/international/world/trial-of-russian-spies-in-germany-strains-diplomatic-relations-a-908975-druck.html](http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/trial-of-russian-spies-in-germany-strains-diplomatic-relations-a-908975-druck.html)); Mark Galeotti, ‘Keeping the spooks in Czech,’ *The Moscow Times*, 24 September 2012 (<http://themoscownews.com/siloviks-scoundrels/20120924/190273084.html>); Michael Weiss, ‘The Estonian spymasters,’ *Foreign Affairs*, 3 June 2014 ([www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141521/michael-weiss/the-estonian-spymasters](http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141521/michael-weiss/the-estonian-spymasters)).

99 Gabrielle Tétrault-Farber, ‘Looking West, Russia beefs up spending on global media giants,’ *The Moscow Times*, 23 September 2014 ([www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/looking-west-russia-beefs-up-spending-on-global-media-giants/507692.html](http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/looking-west-russia-beefs-up-spending-on-global-media-giants/507692.html)).

<sup>100</sup> BBC full financial statements 2013/14, p. 27 ([http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/annualreport/pdf/2013-14/BBC\\_Financial\\_statements\\_201314.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/annualreport/pdf/2013-14/BBC_Financial_statements_201314.pdf)); BBC full financial statements 2010/11, p. F32 ([http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/annualreport/pdf/bbc\\_ar\\_online\\_2010\\_11.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/annualreport/pdf/bbc_ar_online_2010_11.pdf)).

<sup>101</sup> Estonian Public Broadcasting (ERR), ‘Russia expanding soft power, says Mihkelson,’ 24 September 2014 (<http://news.err.ee/v/politics/104086ad-51a1-457d-98f9-a762733cd48f>); idem, ‘ERR proposes 6.5 million euro budget for Russian language channel,’ 4 June 2014 (<http://news.err.ee/v/politics/c52817d0-1fea-470c-a93d-f8bf87ecf493>).

<sup>102</sup> RFERL, ‘US Senators back funding to battle Russian “propaganda”,’ 19 September 2014 ([www.rferl.org/content/us-senators-back-funding-battle-russian-propaganda/26595966.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/us-senators-back-funding-battle-russian-propaganda/26595966.html)).

14. But again, given the vast sums Moscow devotes to IOs, US spending is also likely to have limited impact: £6 million is the 2014 budget for a single Russian “troll” group (see fn. 13 above).

15. Russian reliance on strategic IOs will only grow. Military doctrine to 2020 favours a shift from: destruction to influence; eradication of opponents to their inner decay; conventional battlegrounds to information, psychological and perception wars; and from physical conflict to that in the mind.<sup>103</sup>

### ***Ukraine: the information dimension***

16. Bullets cannot kill ideas. If anything, Crimea’s annexation has again reminded the world that when used properly, ideas make victory possible without needing to fire a single shot.

17. As Ukraine’s economy worsened in the 1990s and 2000s, Moscow expanded its influence by promoting the notion of a “Russian world” across Crimea. To do this, the Kremlin used local political parties and “civil” society groups, pensioner and military veterans’ associations, as well as branches of universities and other State institutions. Moscow funded educational tours to highlight Soviet and Russian history instead of Ukrainian. In time, such “hearts and minds” efforts gave the Kremlin control over Ukrainian civilian and military authorities.<sup>104</sup> Russian military, security and law-enforcement forces, for instance, psychologically and ideologically conditioned Ukrainian counterparts to see them as “friends and brothers”. Once this was done, Moscow was free to act.<sup>105</sup>

18. Russia began the informational part of its Ukraine campaign in 2008 by seeking to discredit: a) the West across post-Soviet countries; and b) Ukrainian independence by underlining Kyiv’s inability to manage its own affairs. The Kremlin also stressed that all Russian-speaking areas are Russian territory. This strategic IO follows a pattern similar to that used by Nazi Germany in the *Sudetenland* in the 1930s. The aim behind such propaganda is to get people acting on instinct, blunting rational thought.<sup>106</sup>

19. After decades of often-wilful neglect by politicians in Kyiv, Ukrainian military and security forces in Crimea were in poor state. Following the EuroMaidan protests, this personnel was thoroughly demoralised, largely cut off from the chain of command and so even more vulnerable to Russian psychological/other pressure. Pro-Kremlin political “tourists” and groups stirred up unrest, promoting an alternative vision to Kyiv rule: Mother Russia will take better care of you. Local paramilitary units soon seized critical infrastructure and vital access points across Crimea.<sup>107</sup>

20. Annexation itself took considerable preparation, underpinned by a complex IO campaign (mainly deception, *maskirovka*, and disinformation, *dezinformatsya*). Russian military personnel moved into Crimea and neighbouring regions under the cover of normal

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103 Berzins, *Russia*, pp. 4-5.

104 Andrii Ryzhenko (ВМС України), ‘Annexation of Crimea: story and lessons,’ 9 June 2014, slide 4 ([www.slideshare.net/andriiryzhenko5/crimea-annexation-lessons-112014](http://www.slideshare.net/andriiryzhenko5/crimea-annexation-lessons-112014)).

105 Ibid., slides 18-19.

106 IfS reporting.

107 Ryzhenko, ‘Annexation,’ slide 9.



rotations, to link up with pre-positioned war materiel. The Sochi Winter Olympics gave further cover for military pre-positioning and exercises, as well as secret deployments under the guise of counter-terrorism measures.<sup>108</sup> And only recently have NATO experts grasped the true strategic importance of Russia's Zapad [West]-2013 exercise, in which an estimated 150,000 personnel took part — including units now fighting in the Donbas.<sup>109</sup>

### **Cognitive challenges**

21. Ultimately, one of the greatest challenges NATO faces is how to prevent RT and other Russian State-controlled outlets from radicalising the Russian diaspora within its borders. But Western societies, policy-makers and their national security communities face two other related issues.

22. One is that partly due to the information revolution since the end of the Cold War, generational awareness of — let alone insight into — relevant periods and incidents in history paradoxically seems to be diminishing. And while a world of instant communication clearly has vast benefits, many “net-izens” seeming compulsion to interact constantly with little or no time for reflection is slowly changing human behaviours, hollowing out our collective memory.<sup>110</sup>

23. The second issue is that for various reasons (not least a round-the-clock media cycle, as well as the vast amount of information decision-makers must absorb and make sense of daily), policy-makers are not getting enough time/distance to focus on truly strategic issues.

24. Shortly before retiring earlier this year, US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Director Lieutenant-General Michael Flynn gave an interview. He stressed three challenges DIA had faced during his tenure: the surprising spread of Islamism despite 12 years of Western counter-insurgency operations; the information revolution of recent decades and how it had driven crises like Ukraine; and challenges US intelligence faced in adapting to this new, data-driven world.<sup>111</sup>

25. Revealingly, Flynn spoke of spending much of his time drawing lessons from what has been called fourth-generation warfare (i.e. conflict between State and non-State actors) against Islamists.<sup>112</sup> Yet sophisticated opponents like Russia, China and Iran have long fought

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108 Ibid.

109 Pauli Järvenpää, ‘Zapad-2013: a view from Helsinki,’ The Jamestown Foundation, August 2014 ([www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/Zapad\\_2013\\_View\\_From\\_Helsinki\\_-\\_Full.pdf](http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/Zapad_2013_View_From_Helsinki_-_Full.pdf)).

110 Erik Fransén, ‘Online work can hobble brain’s important work,’ KTH Institute of Technology, 20 September 2013 (<https://www.kth.se/en/aktuellt/nyheter/online-time-can-hobble-brain-s-important-work-1.415391>); Betsy Sparrow, Jenny Liu and Daniel M. Wegner, ‘Google effects on memory: cognitive consequences of having information at our fingertips,’ *Science* 333:6043 (2011): 776-778; David Rusak, ‘How do you like me now?’ *The Walrus*, 20 July 2010 (<http://walrusmagazine.com/blogs/2010/07/20/how-do-you-like-me-now/>); *The Huffington Post Science*, ‘This is how the Internet is rewiring your brain,’ 30 October 2013 ([www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/30/shocking-ways-internet-rewires-brain\\_n\\_4136942.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/30/shocking-ways-internet-rewires-brain_n_4136942.html)).

111 James Kitfield, ‘Flynn’s last interview: iconoclast departs DIA with a warning,’ *Breaking Defense*, 7 August 2014 (<http://breakingdefense.com/2014/08/flynn-s-last-interview-intel-iconoclast-departs-dia-with-a-warning/>).

112 Ibid.

on an altogether different plane: so-called seventh-generation warfare (i.e. IOs targeting human minds and consciousness).<sup>113</sup>

26. NATO leaders (and their national security communities) need to realise fully both the opportunities and threats that IOs present, and devote adequate human, intellectual and financial resources to address them. Otherwise, when the next Crimea happens on NATO soil, all the bullets in the world will make no difference if the real battlefield is the human mind.

### ***The UK case***

27. Fundamentally, there seems to be no UK national security “community” in the proper sense of the word. During the Cold War, there was a fairly clear division between internal and external security, with an enemy that was clearly identifiable. These days, internal and external threats merge and are often hard to tell apart.

28. With recent and upcoming cuts to the Ministry of Defence and other parts of the Civil Service, and with security/intelligence agencies constrained by budgets, UK Government no longer has the internal expertise (in terms of numbers and quality) to tackle these new, amorphous threats. There is a need, therefore, to create a true national security community that harnesses the enormous talents and power of British society at large (with proper consideration to security/vetting needs).

29. The UK, both within and outside NATO, must be able to fight the *right* kind of war — the one for global public opinion — even more than a military one. And this time round, much more than just some extra funding for “strategic communications” teams will be needed. Rival powers are deploying highly sophisticated, cohesive, comprehensive and well-funded IO strategies. The UK must do likewise, and not underestimate the vast scale of human, intellectual and financial capital its adversaries are expending.<sup>114</sup>

30. Unlike Cabinet, for instance, the JCNSS is ideally placed to carry out long-term, strategic thinking on such vital issues and to stimulate it across Government.

### ***Recommendations***

31. Double current combined spending on BBC World Service and BBC Monitoring by 2017-18. They are tremendous assets to British “hard” and “soft” power alike, and were the envy of NATO during the Cold War for their reputation and impact worldwide. When Russia, China, Iran and others are investing heavily in English-language broadcasting, the UK needs a voice in those countries more than ever.

32. Drawing on expertise inside and outside UK Government, create a national programme to approach IOs as comprehensively as Russia and China do. This cannot be piecemeal, and should be a coherent, integrated, multi- and inter-disciplinary approach over the next

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<sup>113</sup> Berzins, *Russia*, p. 9, fn. 15; Commons Defence Committee, *Towards* (HC 358), especially pp. 4, 12-13, 16-17, 28-29, 32.

<sup>114</sup> China employs over two million people as Internet monitors/analysts to shape domestic and foreign perceptions. Andrea Chen, ‘Chinese Internet censors target collective activities more than sensitive subjects, says Harvard report,’ *South China Morning Post*, 23 August 2014 ([www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1579606/chinese-internet-censors-target-collective-activities-more-sensitive](http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1579606/chinese-internet-censors-target-collective-activities-more-sensitive)).

decade: from information security and strategic communications, through psychology and anthropology, to linguistics and journalism, among others.

33. Closely scrutinise (and if necessary intervene to block) the strategic influence that foreign countries exert on British universities and other institutions through donations, sponsorships and/or language institutes. Too often, these arrangements further donor countries' national interests, not Britain's.

34. Fund a National Critical Languages Programme for British students only: 500 new university places annually over 10 years. By the end of their three-year degree, graduates must be fluent in at least one of the designated critical languages (e.g. Arabic, Cantonese, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Persian, Russian and Urdu) to benefit from student debt relief.

35. Along with key allies like Poland, Georgia, Estonia and Taiwan, for instance, co-fund area studies programmes in the UK highlighting alternative regional perspectives. This should balance out distorted, revisionist narratives that Moscow and Beijing are peddling to Western audiences.

30 September 2014

#### Dr Tim Oliver – written evidence

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#### *How should the 2015 NSS handle the uncertainty over the UK's role in Europe?*

#### **UK-EU relations: geopolitical dimensions**

##### **Britain in Europe: awkward questions**

1. Despite hopes that the 2010 National Security Strategy would explore some of the fundamentals of Britain's international standing, relationships and security, the strategy did not adequately address one of the UK's most important security issues: the UK's relationship with the European Union. Other relationships were also either overlooked or taken for granted, including that with the USA.



2. The UK's relationship with the EU is a core security concern. One would not think this given the UK's parochial debate about the EU. Britain's debate often lacks any appreciation of the wider geopolitical implications of Britain's relations with the EU. Instead the debate focuses almost entirely on British demands and expectations for a renegotiated relationship or, should Britain withdraw – a Brexit – from the EU, what is the best post-withdrawal UK-EU deal (often focused on trade) for the UK.
3. This ignores how renegotiation could change the politics of the EU in ways that affect wider Europe, especially so if, as some fear, it led to a weaker and more fragmented EU. A British exit from the EU could profoundly change the EU, European politics, NATO, transatlantic relations and some wider international relations.
4. The UK-EU relationship has also to be seen in a context in which by mid-century the UK could have a larger population, economy and military than any state in the EU. Questions should therefore be asked about how the absence of the most powerful state from the EU could affect European security, what this could mean for the UK and in particular whether the UK risks throwing away the opportunity to lead Europe.
5. It is these potential wider changes that will be of greatest concern to other members of the EU, allies such as the USA and Turkey, and countries such as Russia. To them, what is good or bad for Britain or their bilateral relations with the UK, will be secondary to wider questions of what Britain's behaviour could mean for Europe, its unity and security. For example, a UK withdrawal that resulted in a more inward looking EU would have significant consequences for transatlantic economic and security relations. An alternative example would be a British exit leading to an EU that becomes more united, with consequences for NATO-EU relations and the EU's position in the world.
6. Just as international concerns about Scotland's independence were not about Scotland but about the wider implications for the UK, Europe and NATO, so too will such thinking shape international responses to the UK's behaviour with the EU.
7. If the 2015 national security strategy is undertaken by a government intent on pursuing a renegotiation and in-out referendum then to ensure the strategy takes fully into account the UK's role in the world and the world Britain will face over the next 10-20 years, it should come to terms with the nature of the UK-EU relationship and the implications for the UK's and Europe's security from a potential British withdrawal.
8. If the government elected in 2015 does not intend to pursue such a course, changes in the EU such as those to the Eurozone mean Britain could face a difficult choice in relations with the rest of the EU. The possible security implications of these choices should be considered in the strategy. Failure to do so would leave any new strategy relying on the same parochial thinking that dominates UK debates about the EU and which leave it unprepared for dealing with the concerns and reactions that are likely to shape those of its allies.
9. The following sections outline several potential security considerations that could flow from the UK's relationship with the EU. They are based on wider research I have undertaken into the possible implications for the EU of a British exit including the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik 2013 research paper *Europe without Britain: assessing the impact on the EU of a British withdrawal*; the 2014 DGAP report (edited jointly with Almut Moller) that contains 26 national views (from around

Europe and the world) on UK-EU relations *The United Kingdom and the European Union: What would a Brexit mean for the EU and other states around the world?*; and work being undertaken for academic journal articles on the geopolitical issues that surround the possibility of a Brexit. Full details of these publications can be found at [www.timothyoliver.com](http://www.timothyoliver.com).

### Britain in Europe: the coming and going power

10. The UK will always be a European power and the security of Europe will be a core concern. The UK's commitment to NATO, membership of the EU, relations with EFTA states, membership of the Council of Europe, close military relations with a range of states around Europe, and bases in Cyprus, Gibraltar and (even beyond withdrawal in 2019) facilities in Germany reflect the fact that Europe and the North Atlantic are central to the security of the UK mainland.
11. Despite Europe's centrality to British security and power, London can appear unsure of itself and in retreat in Europe. This is especially so in the European Union (EU) where the UK's relationship is best captured by words such as [vetoes](#), [spoiler](#), [wrecker](#), [blackmailer](#), [isolated](#), [gambling with its future](#). This is not simply the result of the current government. Britain was 'an awkward partner' in EU politics long before the Conservative Liberal Democrat coalition came to power. Given how long-running the UK-EU saga is, some in the rest of the EU might welcome the prospect of a British exit taking it as a sign of the country's retreat, decline and disappearance. But the awkward reality for supporters of such a view is that this would mean the EU loses the country that by the middle of the century could be – in every key area – the most powerful in Europe. Britain's rise in Europe poses challenges for the EU, especially for Germany, currently the EU's largest and leading state but one facing a long period of decline.
12. Predicting the future, especially the world of the mid-twenty-first century, is filled with uncertainties. Nevertheless, it looks plausible that in the 2040s Britain's population could [overtake](#) that of a [declining Germany](#). The British population could also be amongst the least elderly in the EU. Likewise, by 2020 the UK could have [overtaken France](#) as the EU's second largest economy, while London looks set to continue racing ahead as Europe's global city. While Britain's military faces further cuts, the UK is currently building aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines which could still be in operation beyond 2040 meaning Britain will remain Europe's leading military and strategic power.
13. Projected EU population changes to 2060<sup>115</sup>

2013	2060
Germany – 80.5 million	UK – 79 million
France – 65.6 million	France – 74 million
UK – 63.8 million	Germany – 66 million
Italy – 59.7 million	Italy – 65 million
Spain – 46.7 million	Spain – 52 million

<sup>115</sup> Both sets of figures from Eurostat. 2013: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_PUBLIC/3-20112013-AP/EN/3-20112013-AP-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-20112013-AP/EN/3-20112013-AP-EN.PDF) 2060: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_PUBLIC/3-08062011-BP/EN/3-08062011-BP-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-08062011-BP/EN/3-08062011-BP-EN.PDF)

EU – 505.7 million	EU – 517 million
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14. Of course, population, economic weight and military capabilities are no guarantors of power. Yet, aside from the unlikely prospect of German demographic or French economic resurgence, the UK's size looks set to grow as opposed to decline.

### **An EU without the UK: implications for European Unity**

15. There is little to no analysis of how a British withdrawal or renegotiation might change the EU and what would this mean for the UK and European geopolitics. Two sets of challenges will change the EU internally, both with consequences for the UK and Europe.
- First, the short-term problem of negotiating a British exit and withdrawal. Despite the inclusion of a withdrawal clause in the EU treaties, it is largely unknown territory to negotiate the loss of any state, especially as large a country as the UK. This could distract both the UK and the EU from more pressing political, economic and security concerns.
  - Second, the balance of power within the EU would shift. Negotiations would take place to change the EU's institutions, votes and budgets. Some states fear the loss of a large economically liberal state would make the EU more inward looking, tending more towards protectionism. Governments of large states worry the disappearance of a large state would mean smaller states gain an upper hand. The Franco-German axis could be unsettled, leaving a more dominant Germany. For northern and western European states, the loss of the UK could shift the EU southwards and eastwards, unsettling northern and western states and bringing to an end the possibility of enlargement to states such as Turkey.
16. The overriding concern – in terms of security, economics and politics – surrounding a Brexit is whether it would unite or undo the EU. Worries that granting Britain a renegotiated relationship in the EU will lead to its unravelling because it could lead to an EU 'à la carte' have to be compared with worries a Brexit could set an example that challenges the direction of European integration that other states then follow. Whether this happens depends on how the UK performs outside the EU. It is easy to overplay the potential damage of a Brexit. In facing the Eurozone crisis the EU has faced a far bigger existential crisis than might emerge from the UK withdrawing or renegotiating its membership. A crucial factor here is how a Brexit could impact on Germany, the EU's driver, paymaster and indispensable nation. The EU has yet to face a crisis made in Germany. A Brexit that combined with such a crisis – perhaps one connected to another Eurozone crisis – could lead to an EU reduced to a core of Eurozone members or even the complete break-up of the EU. Alternatively, rid of 'an awkward partner', the EU could become more united. The Eurozone and the EU would more neatly align allowing for more integration. Instead of hitting Germany, a Brexit could strengthen Berlin's position and German support for more integration.

### **Implications for European Security, NATO and Transatlantic Relations**

17. Britain, along with France, has been crucial to many of the EU's efforts to work together on foreign, security and defence policies. Losing Britain from the EU could

undermine any such efforts; potentially further weakening much sought for – especially by the USA – efforts to strengthen European foreign, security defence cooperation whether this be in defence business cooperation or in taking a more robust line with Russia. Nobody should cheer the failure of Europe's predominant political, economic and social organisation to bring about better cooperation amongst European states in these areas. If the EU is incapable of facilitating this then the question arises of who can facilitate it and how.

18. A British exit could add to tensions and rivalry between NATO and the EU. There would be implications for non-EU European members of NATO such as Turkey and Norway. The EU and NATO need to work together, not compete. This is especially so given developments in Eastern Europe and the continuing decline in European defence spending. NATO's hard power capabilities and the EU's 'soft' power capabilities should work in tandem.
19. The USA would be frustrated by a British exit from the EU. Washington would worry about the possibility of a Brexit weakening the UK, changing the EU and complicating European defence cooperation. Despite what some in the UK might like to believe, and what some sceptics of Britain elsewhere in the EU hold as a truth, the UK is not the USA's only ally in the EU. The 'Special Relationship' of intelligence sharing, nuclear cooperation and special forces would likely survive a Brexit.
20. However, the US-EU relationship can overshadow the UK-US relationship, if only because the EU's collective GDP of \$15.9 trillion dwarfs that of Britain's \$2.4 trillion. The USA would look to other allies within the EU such as Poland or the Netherlands. It is unlikely there would be a shortage of applicants to getting closer at the UK's expense.
21. Britain's central role in EU foreign, defence and security cooperation has not been entirely constructive. Fears about sovereignty and jeopardising NATO have constrained the UK's commitment. Removing the UK could free such an obstruction. We should remember that the EU's international relations – whether in military or soft power – are varied and widespread. Should the EU without the UK act more coherently then it could develop as a more robust European arm of NATO, or, as some fear, an alternative to it.
22. Other states such as Australia, Japan or Canada would therefore think carefully about how Britain's behaviour could influence their relations with the wider EU and Europe. Many of them, and the USA, would resist and resent any behaviour by the UK that essentially asked them to choose between the EU and UK. Britain should not think that if it withdraws from the EU then its allies will also change their relations with it in favour of the UK. The EU, and its individual members, will remain important and collectively more so than the UK.
23. From the perspective of the USA, and from other states such as Russia, the outcome of a Brexit, or British behaviour that weakens the EU, could be a more multipolar Europe. The poles could be the UK, Russia, Turkey and the EU. An EU weakened by the exit of the UK could make more likely a scenario of Europe being a contested space between Russia, the USA and Asia. Again, should the EU become more united then the UK, Russia and Turkey would be smaller poles surrounding the dominant EU pole. Either option would have significant security implications for the UK that should be taken into account while drafting the 2015 national security strategy.

## **Conclusions**

24. While there is much debate about the possible implications for the UK of either a renegotiated relationship with the EU or an exit, there is little analysis of what this could mean in a wider European geopolitical sense. This sort of thinking should feed into the 2015 national security strategy when it considers UK-EU relations.
25. HMG cannot assess whether a Brexit or renegotiation is good or bad for the UK – especially a UK that could by mid-century be the most powerful state in Europe – unless it adequately assesses whether it would be good or bad development for wider European geopolitics. Failure to do so would demonstrate a narrow, parochial way of thinking about British national security.
26. Geopolitical thinking will be the way UK behaviour is viewed by other members of the EU, members of NATO, especially the USA, and countries such as Australia, Japan or Russia.

## **Oxford Research Group – written evidence**

### **Summary**

- The strategic purpose of the NSS should be to build global peace and security as the UK cannot insulate itself from insecurity abroad. The NSS can only achieve this by acknowledging what drives insecurity, not merely acknowledging the symptoms of conflict and insecurity.
- The UK should plan to manage its relative decline as a world power and focus its resources more regionally or through intergovernmental organisations. The National Security Council should coordinate its resources and levers of international influence as part of a comprehensive cross-government strategy.
- Sequencing of the forthcoming NSS review and Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) is critical. Unlike in 2010, the NSS must precede the SDSR and be coordinated with it such that UK defence and security policy responds explicitly to risks identified in the NSS.
- The UK's key alliances over the next 20 years are likely to privilege the US and European partners, notably France. This will have significant reputational implications given recent and current military interventions. Broader and deeper relations with 'southern' democracies is desirable in future.
- The main short and medium term risks to UK security are likely to arise as 'blowback' from post-2001 UK military campaigns and perceived support for authoritarian regimes in the greater Middle East. Climate change, marginalisation and resource scarcity pose major long-term threats.

- The NSS should be informed by a broad ‘human security’ perspective that understands individual and collective security as linked through a web of social, political, economic and ecological factors and responsibilities. Broader debate on the nature of human, national and global security is desirable as part of the NSS review process.

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Oxford Research Group (ORG) is a UK-based charity that provides information, analysis, methodology, policy advice and mediation in order to promote a more sustainable approach to global security. ORG currently runs or hosts programmes working on: sustainable security and alternatives to militarisation; the implications of ‘remote control’ warfare; and mediation of several conflicts in the Middle East.

1.2 This submission will focus on seven questions raised by the Joint Committee in its call for evidence:

- The UK’s national security priorities
  1. What should these be over the next 20 years and how should they steer the next NSS?
- The UK’s place in the world
  2. Should the UK plan to maintain its global influence?
- Strategic choices
  3. How can the next NSS be made most useful in guiding decisions in government and long-term spending decisions?
- International relationships
  4. Which will be the UK’s critical international relationships over the next 20 years?
- Risks and contingencies
  5. What are the main risks to the UK’s national security?
  6. Is the government’s horizon-scanning effective?
- Scope
  7. How broadly should the NSS define national security?

## 2. The UK’s National Security Priorities, 2015-35

What should the UK’s national security priorities be for the next 20 years, and how should these steer the next NSS?

2.1 The objective of the NSS should be to build an environment of sustainable international peace and security, recognising that the UK’s national security is indivisible in the long-term from that enjoyed by other states and peoples. This is necessarily a *strategic* process that must identify not just current and future threats to the UK but also what drives the insecurity behind those threats. This is crucial for the Strategy to devise means by which

the UK can work to mitigate or resolve these factors over the long-term. Focus on defined present threats or responses to specific crises is likely to lead to policies that seek to contain or ‘neutralise’ threats through securitised responses. While occasionally necessary as emergency measures, such responses are often counter-productive and antithetical to the strategic objective of preventing and resolving conflict.

2.2 Approaches taken to prioritise risks should be reviewed, including a number of aspects of the National Security Risk Assessment Exercise (NSRA) that formed part of the 2010 NSS. The compilation of this static ranking system to inform the decisions laid out in the SDSR contradicts assertions within the 2010 NSS that the diversity and complexity of the contemporary risk environment means that “no single risk will dominate [...] we no longer face such predictable threats”. This assertion has certainly proven true since 2010. “Risk of major instability, insurgency or civil war overseas which creates an environment that terrorists can exploit to threaten the UK” (considered only a Tier Two risk in 2010) has been at the forefront of UK security thinking since then and has motivated UK interventions in Libya, Mali and now Iraq. Given the complex and changeable nature of the risk environment, the utility of a static ranking system should be revisited.

2.3 The NSRA should be more directly linked to the NSS, which has in its current iteration taken a more nuanced approach to complex risks. Both the 2010 NSS and preceding Ministry of Defence report *Global Strategic Trends – Out to 2040* describe global environmental constraints and resource insecurity, including climate disruption, as a source and multiplier of critical risks to the UK. Yet, inconsistency between the NSRA and the NSS means that threats arising from the multiplier effect of climate change – not just natural disasters – did not feature in the 2010 NSRA. Given that SDSR defence policy takes the security risks ranked in the NSRA as a foundation for security responses, any NSRA undertaken for the next NSS must include a more comprehensive view of security risks.

### 3. The UK’s Place in the World

Should the UK plan to maintain its global influence?

3.1 The UK must be realistic about its global influence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and plan to manage its relative decline rather than cling to the role of a 19<sup>th</sup> century great power. The UK may currently be a global diplomatic and trading power but it no longer has the capacity to project effective military power beyond Europe, the Mediterranean and North Atlantic. The rise of new powers in the South Atlantic, Indian Ocean and western Pacific will be the defining feature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century geopolitical transition. This is likely to be accompanied by greater local resistance to the privileged military and diplomatic role of the UK and other former colonial powers outside of strictly European affairs.

3.2 Global influence is complex; its aspects and levers include diplomacy, military, aid, trade, finance, historic or reputational influence, and the ‘soft’ powers of media, culture and

education. These may be reinforcing, or they may negate one another. Whereas the UK traditionally thinks of its historical legacy as boosting its contemporary influence, this legacy may actually undermine UK security in an increasingly educated, informed and unequal world. Factors that tend to undermine British perceived legitimacy and influence include: the colonial legacy, historic and recent military interventions, retention of nuclear weapons, failure to reform the UN Security Council and its veto, alliances, and arms sales. In particular, the UK's very close relationship with the US has an enormous impact on global perceptions of British power, influence and independence. Uncritical diplomatic and economic relationships in the Middle East, notably with Israel and the Gulf monarchies, also have significant consequences for British influence.

3.3 The UK should consider what combination and coordination of its levers of global influence would best achieve its strategic objective of upholding national and international security. Taking a more holistic human security approach will help to reduce the counter-productive dependency on military tools in attempting to build, enforce, or reinforce security. The National Security Council (NSC) is potentially a very important institution in assessing and coordinating the UK's various levers of influence over national and global security governed by a comprehensive, all-government mandate and strategy. It should be given greater powers to distribute and coordinate these resources within an agreed overall envelope, rather than the present system, which *de facto* prioritises military over diplomacy over aid and soft power resources, and prioritises control over cooperation.

#### 4. Strategic Choices

How can the next NSS be made most useful in guiding decisions in government and long-term spending decisions?

4.1 Given that the NSS should inform the resourcing decisions of the SDSR, the near synchronised release of the NSS and SDSR in 2010 gave rise to questions of strategic continuity. If the NSS is truly to guide long-term spending decisions, the timing of the updating of both documents is crucial. While welcome, the timing of this inquiry into the NSS already gives rise to questions of whether enough time is left ahead of 2015-16 to sequence the processes adequately. We urge the committee to do what it can to urge prioritising the NSS review ahead of the SDSR, pushing the SDSR process into 2016 if necessary. This staggered scheduling for review of these strategies, such that the NSS can be announced before the SDSR, would ensure that the latter can be a truly coherent and strategic response to the NSS.

4.2 The NSS as a document is less important than the NSC as an institution. Translating the NSS into actionable policy will require that the NSC be resourced to serve its original purpose. While the NSC should be the central instrument for translating the NSS from paper to policy for continual assessment of the global threat environment, it has thus far



spent focused more on crisis response than on long-term responses to international security challenges. The Joint Committee stated its concerns in this regard in February 2013.<sup>116</sup>

4.3 The context within which the NSS is reviewed is also crucial. Government defence procurement decisions over the past year – including the confirmation of the purchase of 14 F-35B fighters, new aircraft carriers and the recent £1.1bn investment in new intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance technology for counter-terrorism operations – pre-determine the options and resources available for British security operations in future, *before* the NSS has outlined what the likely threats will be and the SDSR has outlined how the UK will respond to them. We urge the committee to consider within the NSS review what ability the Government should have to make key defence spending decisions so close to the updating of the strategy itself.

## 5. International Relationships

Which will be the UK's critical international relationships over the next 20 years?

5.1 It is likely that UK's critical international relationships will continue to be with NATO and the European Union (whether or not the UK remains a full member) over the next decades. The United States and, to much lesser extent, France are likely to continue to be the main bilateral partners. These relationships may be problematic for the UK's security in that it is widely perceived to be the junior and uncritical partner to the US as the dominant (but declining) world power. Thus, discontents about the US' military-led control and containment policy towards the non-western world will increasingly be reflected upon the UK. The relationship with France may have a localised resonance (notably in Africa and the Near East) for perceptions of the UK where the two great nineteenth century powers are seen to collaborate in neo-colonial dominance. In these regards, NATO's ambitions to carve a role for itself in 'non-territorial defence' outside of Europe may be problematic for the UK.

5.2 Whereas for most of their history the EU and most of NATO were almost exceptional in their commitment to democracy and civil liberties, the number of such broadly 'liberal' states has increased hugely in the last 20 to 30 years. Many of the Latin American, Asian and African states of the 'Third Wave' of democratization (roughly 1970s-1990s) are now becoming well institutionalised democracies with comparable values to the UK. Yet, with a few Commonwealth exceptions, the UK's key international partners remain confined to the North Atlantic alliance of the late 1940s. As the relative power and reputation of the 'West' declines, effective security and influence for the UK will depend on stronger relationships with non-western democracies such as India, Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico and South Africa.

## 6. Risks

What are the main risks to the UK's national security?

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<sup>116</sup> JCNSS, The work of the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy in 2012, 2<sup>nd</sup> Report of Session, HL Paper 115 HC 984, 28 February 2013, p.4.

6.1 ‘Blowback’ from the various ill-considered UK and US military interventions since 2001 is currently the most acute risk to UK security. These have proved comprehensively that force has limited use in countering terrorism and violent extremism. Many of the most pressing security challenges facing the UK are directly related to the previous use of military force in regime change operations such as Iraq and Libya, both of which have resulted in resurgent violent extremism, myriad armed actors, fragile and fractured states incapable of dealing with these dynamics, and huge negative consequences for regional security environments. Threat from these operations is compounded by explicit or implicit British support for US, Israeli, French and Saudi or Emirati operations elsewhere in majority Muslim countries, in which the UK is perceived as part of the ‘far enemy’ with a neo-colonial ambition to divide and rule the Islamic world.

6.2 As assessed in the 2010 NSS, and *Global Strategic Trends—Out to 2040*, climate disruption and its multiplier effect on global security issues will be a driver of insecurity “so pervasive in nature and influence that it will affect the life of everyone on the planet over the next 30 years”. The current decade has already seen a clear increase in impact across the world. Events since 2010, including excessive heat waves, floods, droughts and Typhoon Haiyan, the strongest land-fall cyclone ever recorded, all point to accelerated disruption. Current impact is asymmetric, falling mainly in often densely populated areas of the ‘Global South’ such as south and south-east Asia, where high levels of poverty and/or rapid urbanisation result in low resilience to climate disruption. The security impacts of such disruption on unregulated migration, competition over resources and subsequent exacerbation of existing tensions must not be underestimated. Indeed, the role of climate disruption as a catalyst of the ‘Arab Spring’ is increasingly being explored.

6.3 A complex interplay of discrimination, poverty and social and economic inequalities continues to undermine global security. Uprisings across the Arab world, devastation wrought by Boko Haram in northern Nigeria, and violent protests in the streets of Paris, London, Stockholm, Rio de Janeiro and Ferguson have brought the impact of marginalisation to the forefront of security debates in the current decade. This is a global phenomenon with interconnected local and transnational drivers, in many cases exacerbated by severe global resource and environmental constraints. In particular, potential links between social exclusion and terrorism – outlined as a Tier Two risk in the 2010 NSRA - appear to be coming to the fore in sectarian conflicts across the Levant. As income and group inequalities widen, and the disproportionate impact on marginalised populations of environmental, food, land, water and energy insecurity becomes increasingly clear, such risks will be exacerbated.

6.4 Compounding the security risks posed by socio-economic inequality, increased access to information technologies around the world means that, while the great majority of the world’s population are on the economic and political margins, their knowledge of their own marginalisation is steadily increasing, as is their organising capacity. Anti-elite sentiments can be a powerful driver of radicalisation and militarisation, and the longer the

majority world is side-lined from the benefits of global economic prosperity, the greater the threat to global security.

Is the Government's horizon-scanning effective, and are our national contingency plans adequate?

6.5 A number of important horizon-scanning processes, such as the MOD's *Global Strategic Trends* provide ample understanding of the complexity of the modern security environment and myriad scenarios that might arise to threaten British security. Again, the central instrument for bringing such analysis into the NSS – the National Security Council – has been overly focused on specific *reactions* to global crises. Effective horizon-scanning, particularly towards a preventive security agenda can help to address the recurrent nature of modern security challenges, but only if the NSC is tasked and resourced to embrace such methodologies and respond proactively.

6.6 The NSS process must consider how to actively link long-term thinking into the NSS and, more importantly, into the work of the NSC. While the most recent *Global Strategic Trends* study considers the security environment for the next 30 years, the static quinquennial nature of the NSS reduces incentive to raise the risk horizon beyond five years. More effective use of the NSC presents an opportunity to ensure that the NSS remains a 'living document' capable of absorbing shifts in the global security environment and planning more strategic responses.

## 7. Scope

How broadly should the NSS define national security?

7.1 Despite its island location and military strength, there is no prospect of the UK isolating its 'national' security from not just regional but global insecurity. This should be an underlying assumption of the new NSS, just as the 2010 NSS states that "Our security, prosperity and freedom are interconnected and mutually supportive". UK security, prosperity and freedom cannot be effectively insulated from global insecurity, poverty and oppression. This is particularly true where such conditions are, or are widely perceived to be, the result – directly or indirectly – of UK policy, such as military interventions or support for authoritarian governments, or UK protection of structural advantages, such as trade policies and veto rights in the UN Security Council.

7.2 The focus on prosperity as a fundament of national security in the 2010 NSS is problematic in that the UK's historic and contemporary prosperity are rooted in structural inequalities in the international economic and financial systems that undermine the prosperity of many less developed societies. In particular, the next NSS may wish to examine the impact on global human security of the City of London and several UK overseas territories in their role as financial hubs. These have negatively impacted the UK's will to

respond effectively to Russian actions in Ukraine as well as contributing, through facilitating capital flight, organised crime and tax avoidance, to the fragility of many poorer countries.

7.3 Thinking globally, the NSS should follow a broad ‘human security’ perspective that understands individual and collective security as linked through a web of social, political, economic and ecological factors and responsibilities. There is by no means a national consensus on what ‘security’ means and a wider, more open debate on the nature of human, national and global security is highly desirable as part of the NSS review process. The recent Ammerdown Invitation<sup>117</sup> to dialogue on ‘Security for the future’ is a valuable contribution to the British reconceptualization of security and should be taken up by Parliament and Government as part of a process of rethinking UK defence and security strategy.

**Oxford Research Group** is an independent non-governmental organisation and registered charity, which works to promote a more sustainable approach to global security. ORG has been building trust between policy-makers, academics, the military and civil society since 1982. ORG and its internationally recognised consultants combine detailed knowledge of security issues, together with an understanding of political decision-making, and many years of expertise in facilitating constructive dialogue. More information can be found at: [www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk](http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk)

This submission was written for ORG by Richard Reeve, Director of the Sustainable Security Programme, and Zoë Pelter of the Sustainable Security Programme, with input from Betsy Barkas, a Quaker Peace and Social Witness Peacemaker.

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## Population Matters

### 1. Summary

The UK’s rate of population growth is one of the highest in Europe; England is already the most crowded country in Europe; the UK is ever less self-sufficient in energy, food, and ecological resources, let alone manufactures; 80% of the people want a smaller population; and yet the ONS 2050 projection is between 68.7 and 87.7 million (ie 7 and 46 more Manchesters). These have security implications; and only a stable or reducing population will prevent these sources of potential internal instability increasing. Internationally, population growth and its consequent resource and job shortages are a significant contributory factor to the Arab rising, and to instability in the Sahel, which can spill over into British cities. Resource shortages are also population ‘longages’. (‘Not

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<sup>117</sup> The Ammerdown Invitation: Security for the Future, published 23 September 2014 on openSecurity.net, see [http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/sites/default/files/Security\\_for\\_the\\_Future.pdf](http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/sites/default/files/Security_for_the_Future.pdf)

enough stuff available to go round all the people” is synonymous with “Too many people for the stuff available to go round”). Most of the numbers quoted below are from our own research.

### 2. The UK Economy

It has become unfashionable among economists to discuss the balance of payments; yet it is far from clear what we shall export in exchange for our food, energy and manufactures, demand for which increases with population growth, as security of supply decreases.

‘Financial services’ from outside the Euro area seem unconvincing, even without recent scandals and pre-2008 incompetence. Population growth also contributes to: un- and under-employment (which remains high); low real wages (because the work-force grows faster than jobs); and thus increased income inequality (as returns to capital exceed those to labour). All population growth creates a gap between GDP growth, on which economists focus, and GDP per capita, which is what matters to ordinary citizens. Less noticed is the heavy infrastructure cost of population growth, paid by people already here solely in order to maintain standards for ever more people. This masquerades as ‘investment’, but is actually depreciation or maintenance. We estimate the costs to 2050 will be £1.1 trillion at the lower end of the 2050 population projections, and £4.2 trillion at the upper end – all pre-empting genuine investment funds which could have been spent on improving services and quality of life.

### 3. Climate Change

Population growth exacerbates the risks from climate change in three ways:

- a) Every additional person uses more energy and thus either increases **carbon emissions** or reduces everyone else’s sustainable carbon ‘allowance’. If the EU 80% carbon reduction target were met, but the 2050 EU population hit the lower end of the projected range, this ‘allowance’ would be 25% higher than at the upper end. The gap for the UK, growing faster than the EU average, would be greater.
- b) Every additional person puts more pressure on UK food resources – already vulnerable to flood and drought like all agriculture - and hence decreases our **food security** further.
- c) More people need more houses, some of which will go into flood plains, increasing **flood risk** and the costs of its management.

### 4. Energy Security

The energy supply and cost (higher energy bills) implications of reaching the top of the projected 2050 UK population range rather than the bottom, while cutting carbon emissions by 80% below 1990 levels include:

- The additional cost of new power stations would be between £380bn and £1.02tn;
- For zero carbon, this equates to 260k more wind turbines, or 20 more per day;
- Holding emissions constant requires additional renewables for 450k people pa;

- Massive investment is needed in (still infant) energy storage technology, to overcome renewables intermittency; this rises sharply with population growth.

## **5. Food Security**

The UK is currently 62% self-sufficient in food. At current consumption levels, the maximum sustainable UK population that could be fed from UK resources in 2050 would be 15m. The projected 75 million (2050 medium projection) could be sustained only at 20% of current consumption per head. This disregards: climate tipping points; the progressive loss of farmland to housing and other built development; and heightened flood risk. The conventional view that the 'world food market' will always feed us is a naïve economists' abstraction, ignoring the evidence that food exporting countries impose export controls when their own reserves are threatened. Food shortages have major security implications. "Every city is nine meals from anarchy" (axiom attributed to the Security Service).

## **6. Water Security**

Memories being short, many have forgotten the major water shortage threatening in early 2012. The implications for UK water supplies at the limits of the projected 2050 population range include: the upper limit would require 1.5 - 4.9m more tonnes of water per day than the lower limit; the additional reservoirs would cost £5.9 - £22.6bn more, adding to bills; all merely to maintain supply standards.

## **7. Biophysical Sustainability**

The (Blue Planet Award-winning) Global Footprint Network estimates the UK's renewable ecological resources at 25 % of its current consumption per head and technology, the deficit being made up from other countries' bio- capacity and from natural capital. This gives us a biophysically sustainable population (indefinitely from own resources) of 17 million. (GFN figures are imprecise, but probably over-estimates, since they ignore non-renewables and biodiversity).

## **8. International Security**

As the Foreign Affairs Select Committee's report on 'Extremism in North and West Africa (March 2014) made clear, "We see evidence of a link between rapid population growth and political instability. We believe that the UK Government should continue to impress on its international partners the need for international action to extend the availability of family planning in the Western Sahel." Population Matters has long argued for all development projects in high-fertility countries, aiming for security and prosperity, to include a significant element of family planning and women's empowerment programmes.

## **9. International Development**

This poverty/security link is widely observed. In the 20 highest fertility countries with the fastest growing populations, the number of people in absolute poverty has increased during the past three decades, despite a sharp increase in the amount of aid given. High fertility rates and consequent rapid population growth is the main cause. The key aid sector to reducing fertility and hence poverty, family planning, received only 0.31% of total aid. In its absence, all other aid programmes consist largely of running to catch up with population growth, and are thus partly or wholly wasted.

## **10. Conclusion**

In over-crowded countries on an over-crowded and degrading planet, population growth exacerbates most structural long-term problems, including those of security. Given the relatively trivial cost of the programmes needed to correct it, such programmes should be factored into all strategies to achieve long-term sustainability, including security strategies.

## **11. Recommendations**

The Government and opinion formers should:

- create a national consensus that a stable or smaller population is an urgent national interest;
- add Population to the duties of an inter-departmental Minister, with a small co-ordinating staff;
- review tax and benefit policies, removing perverse incentives for large (>two children) families;
- set a long-term UK policy aim of balanced migration;
- promote population stabilisation policies, by voluntary means, internationally.

Roger Martin, Chair, Population Matters

21 August 2014

## **A progressive vision for peace? Towards the next National Security Strategy**

### **Summary**

Saferworld welcomes the opportunity to input into the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy's inquiry towards the next National Security Strategy. As a UK-based independent conflict prevention and peacebuilding organisation, operating in over twenty conflict-affected and fragile states around the world, we can offer relevant perspectives and reflections on how the UK pursues its security and development interests in the world. This submission will argue that in order to protect Britain's interests effectively in the long-term, UK national security should be interpreted through a broad lens that takes the promotion of sustainable peace – founded on human security and inclusive, fair, responsive and

accountable states – as its overarching objective. While recognising that a more stable and less aggressive world order is in the UK's interests, the National Security Strategy should outline what this means for the UK in practice and how the different elements of government, civil society, the private sector, academia and the public can contribute to a vision of UK national security that has human security considerations at its heart.

### **Recommendations for the next National Security Strategy:**

- Take the long view: think through the impact of the UK's engagement in the world in terms of what will work in favour of sustainable peace in the long term.
- Prioritise a conflict-sensitive approach to the UK's overseas engagement: avoid exacerbating drivers of conflict in pursuit of shorter-term or narrowly-defined national security or economic objectives.
- Attach much greater importance to the long-term impacts of UK and partners' strategies on good governance and corruption, taking every opportunity to encourage countries where the UK engages to achieve inclusive, responsive, fair and accountable state-society relations as the first priority for achieving international stability.
- Continue to build on a commitment to conflict prevention as outlined in the Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS) across all UK Government departments engaged in conflict-affected and fragile states, including through sustained support for people's access to security and justice as part of development programming.
- Ensure parliamentary scrutiny over decisions taken by the National Security Council on the whole of the UK's engagement in conflict-affected states, including the new Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF).
- Promote international cooperation on efforts to prevent conflict, including through continued support for the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and inclusion of peace in the post-2015 development framework.
- Increase engagement with rising powers to expand international cooperation on conflict prevention.
- Initiate a wider public discussion on how the UK defines and pursues its national security overseas.

### **Introduction**

1. Saferworld welcomed the recognition that it is in the UK's interests to promote a more peaceful world in the 2010 National Security Strategy, and subsequent articulation of the UK's approach in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS). However, we also emphasised that while there are benefits for the UK's own national security in working to support the development of more stable and cohesive societies around the world, in order to be effective in promoting sustainable peace, a concern for ordinary people living in fragile states must be at the heart of the UK's conflict prevention efforts. A focus on addressing and preventing conflict is welcome and should remain a core commitment in the next National Security Strategy. However, there is a risk that humanitarian or development aid will be made subservient to short term national security objectives. This must be carefully avoided because it is likely to render aid to these contexts ineffective, compromise important principles of the impartiality of aid, and expose aid agencies to violence. To be effective, UK aid spent in these countries must be about



meeting the real needs of poor, vulnerable, marginalised populations, and contributing to sustainable peace through supporting the achievement of human security.

2. The opportunity presented by the next National Security Strategy to examine the practical lessons from the UK's engagement in conflict affected states, including counterterrorism, statebuilding and stabilisation approaches, should help to inform the UK's approach. The next National Security Strategy should reaffirm and build on the commitment to conflict prevention articulated in the BSOS to become increasingly coherent and long-term in practice. While this submission does not cover the whole of the content of the National Security Strategy, it will argue that the long view – forward thinking and firmly grounded in evidence of the effects of past interventions – must be taken to underpin a shift in the UK's approach to national security that recognises the interdependence of the UK's own security with peace and stability founded on good governance throughout the world.

### **Defining UK National Security Priorities**

3. When determining the UK's national security priorities for the next twenty years it will be essential to look at how the UK sees its role in the world and what definition of 'national security' it is pursuing. There are currently competing narratives describing the UK's priorities and desired role in the world.<sup>118</sup> The next National Security Strategy provides an opportunity to articulate a shared vision of UK national security with human security at its heart, reaffirming a commitment to support efforts to build open, just and accountable state-society relations, promoting good governance and the rule of law, while assessing whether pursuing other short-term interests might undermine these efforts.

4. It is not enough to define UK national security interests in the short term, or solely based on the security of Britain in isolation from the security and well-being of the public in the world at large. Developing the next National Security Strategy offers an opportunity to reflect on how national security objectives have been pursued in practice through relatively short-term UK-supported stabilisation, counter-terrorism and statebuilding interventions overseas. The Committee should examine the impact of these interventions on peace and stability overseas and the relationship between overseas peace and stability and UK national security. Are national security objectives and the interventions pursued to deliver them consistent with the evidence of what works in promoting sustainable peace – founded on human security and inclusive, fair, responsive and accountable states?<sup>119</sup>

5. In pursuing its national security interests the UK should question what injustices or grievances may result directly or indirectly from short-term and conflict-insensitive policy decisions. The nature of such decisions may be:

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<sup>118</sup> For more on this, see written evidence by Owen Barder and Alex Evans to the International Development Committee in inquiry 'Beyond Aid', paragraphs 32-37 <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/international-development-committee/beyond-aid-the-future-uk-approach-to-development/written/12424.pdf>

<sup>119</sup> For evidence and analysis of what works for promoting sustainable peace see Saferworld, 'Addressing conflict and violence from 2015 - Issue Paper 2: What are the key challenges? What works in addressing them?' (November 2011) <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/708-issue-paper-2-what-are-the-key-challenges-what-works-in-addressing-thema>

- military (indiscriminate use of violence, military aid to actors who are perpetrating abuses),
- economic (sanctions perceived to be unjust, failure to regulate markets in goods and resources from conflict-affected countries, imposition of unequal trade rules, irresponsible arms trade),
- diplomatic (support for allies who are violating human rights and/or international law), or
- development related (further support for such allies).

Instead, all UK policy instruments should be consistent with and support the long-term objective of encouraging ‘legitimate and effective institutions’, as set out in the BSOS. The BSOS recognises the risks of providing too much capacity building support to states, and that a balance is required to strengthen accountability and empower society to help shape more inclusive, responsive, fair and accountable governance. Looking to the next National Security Strategy, it will be important to reinforce this commitment and place greater emphasis on the security and well-being of ordinary men, women, boys and girls, including through building accountability and transparency of state institutions and working to strengthen and empower communities and civil society to shape their institutions of governance and service delivery. Avoiding support for repressive regimes in the pursuit of UK national security objectives is a particular lesson to take on board, as poor governance, a lack of accountability and corruption are known to be particularly important drivers of conflict.<sup>120 121</sup> It can be tempting to support security actors that are on the same ‘side’ as the UK in the pursuit of short-term objectives through military aid or other support, but doing so is likely to entrench corrupt and abusive actors, and therefore serve to undermine long-term stability.

6. In order to avoid these pitfalls, it will be important both to learn lessons from past engagements (such as stabilisation activities in Afghanistan) as well as undertake thorough

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<sup>120</sup> On governance and conflict: ‘There is significant convergence in the literature on the central importance of state-society relations in fostering less violent, more sustainably peaceful societies. Paffenholz, the Crisis States Research Centre (CSRC) and Stewart all stress the importance of how societies are governed, the type of institutions that exist, and the emphasis placed on gaining societal trust. Backing this up, World Bank research has found that better governance reduces the risk of civil war by 35-45%. The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) has come to a similar conclusion through analysis of 300 cross-country datasets and its own Global Peace Index for 153 countries.’ See especially: Paffenholz, T, ‘Underdevelopment and Armed Conflict: Making Sense of the Debates’ (conference paper, 2008), p.17. Putzel J, Di John J, ‘Meeting The Challenges Of Crisis States’ (Crisis States Research Centre, 2012), p.iii, citing Goldstone J et al, ‘A global model for forecasting political instability’, *American Journal of Political Science*, 54, (2010), pp.190–208. D Keen, ‘Greed and grievance in civil war’, in *International Affairs*, 88: 4 (2012) 757–777. World Bank, *World development report 2011: conflict, security and development* (2011), p.10. Institute for Economics and Peace, ‘Structures of peace: identifying what leads to peaceful societies’ (2011), p.7.

<sup>121</sup> On corruption and conflict: ‘Research by the IEP highlights that two indexes focusing on corruption (Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) and the World Bank’s World Governance Indicator on Control of Corruption) correlate very strongly with the Global Peace Index – demonstrating a very strong link between corruption and conflict. At the global level, both the OECD and Collier have suggested that measures to curb corrupt practices by governments and businesses are vital.’ See especially: Institute for Economics and Peace, ‘Structures of peace: identifying what leads to peaceful societies’ (2011), pp.30-31; OECD, *Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Fragility*, (2011), p.55. Paul Collier, *The Plundered Planet*, (2010), p.82.

ongoing conflict analysis to identify drivers of conflict and paths towards peace to inform the UK's approach in each context. A thorough conflict and peacebuilding analysis should inform the UK's upstream conflict prevention activities, including under the new Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) that will replace the Conflict Pool in 2015 under the direction of the National Security Council (NSC).<sup>122</sup> In the midst of potentially competing priorities at the National Security Council level, the prioritisation of a long-term approach with a focus on human security under the CSSF will be important, as will ensuring that overall UK engagement is focused on a shared vision for long-term sustainable development.

7. In this regard there has been progress since the last National Security Strategy in the form of the Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability Guidelines (JACS) which are increasingly being used to conduct analysis coordinated by the Stabilisation Unit. However, the Committee may want to clarify how terms of reference for each JACS are decided – who commissions them and how often are they reviewed? Is there a relevant JACS for each priority country identified by the National Security Council? To what extent do they inform the development and adoption of country strategies outlining the UK's political, economic, defence and development engagements by the National Security Council? What other information and analysis is available to the National Security Council and how far up the list of priorities is overseas peace and stability? The encouraging progress to imbed conflict analysis should be consolidated during the development and review of NSC country strategies to ensure that all aspects of UK engagement are conflict-sensitive and working in favour of sustainably peaceful outcomes in the long-term. Identifying the drivers of conflict and the motivation of actors is a crucial step in assessing the likely impact of interventions and resources, including those for counterterrorism, stabilisation and statebuilding, on long-term peace overseas and related UK national security.

### **How broadly should the NSS define national security?**

8. The Prime Minister in his evidence to the Committee emphasised the need to adopt a wide definition of national security, noting that it is in the UK's national security interest to invest in development and to promote British values such as democracy, human rights and freedom of speech if the UK is to promote security in the longer term<sup>123</sup>. We would encourage the Committee to continue to ensure that values such as human rights and personal freedoms are at the core of any future National Security Strategy and that a progressive definition of UK interests is adhered to in practice in the UK's engagement across departments, not just through DFID's work.

9. However, DFID does have an important role to play in promoting a fairer and more secure world through its work. Saferworld has long argued for the value of investing in addressing the drivers of conflict and the factors that perpetuate people's insecurity in

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<sup>122</sup> See joint briefing by Saferworld, International Alert and Conciliation Resources for detailed recommendations to parliamentarians on the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/834-investing-in-long-term-peace-the-new-conflict-stability-and-security-fund>

<sup>123</sup> <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/joint-committees/national-security-strategy/PM%20session/JCNSS14-01-30TranscriptCameronC.pdf>

everyday life as part of promoting development. UK support for people's access to responsive and accountable security and justice services as part of its development work serves as an important contribution to overall development aims. The contribution of development to reducing inequalities in access to resources, opportunities and services (including security and justice) between different identity groups within developing countries is likewise hugely important to conflict prevention. The UK should continue to contribute to preventing conflict through its development work, including through promoting 'positive peace' in the post-2015 development framework.<sup>124</sup>

10. This does not mean instrumentalising development in the pursuit of national security, but rather recognising the value in promoting the welfare of ordinary people, including through fair and accountable security and justice services and socio-economic development, for promoting sustainable peace overseas as a contributor to UK national security. It should not be assumed that development aid alone is the solution to those conflicts that are defined in popular discourse and policy circles as problems of radicalisation, extremism or terrorism. Nor should development be employed to secure military gains, as this undermines not only the supposed impartiality of aid, but also its effectiveness and endangers humanitarian actors. The resolution of conflict – including that involving 'extremists' and 'terrorists' – requires national, regional and international actors to consider their own roles and responsibilities and the impact that their combined political, economic, security and development engagement will have on the issues underpinning the conflict.

11. In relation, it is essential to have wider public discussion about how the UK defines and pursues its national security. The UK Government has been a key supporter of community-focused security dialogues in the developing world; it is equally important that there are conversations at the community level in the UK about how the UK interprets and asserts its national security interests abroad. How do people in the UK understand our common security? What does the public know about the impacts of the UK's actual interventions overseas? Does the public understand how their own security depends on finding lasting solutions to conflicts overseas founded on the rights of all people to justice, security and livelihoods? The Committee may consider for example a call recently put out by a group of experienced UK peacebuilding experts (The Ammerdown Invitation) for a broad civic conversation about alternatives to the current approach to national security<sup>125</sup>. The group outlines its concerns about the existing model and offers a different vision for the future, welcoming input on this debate from government, politicians, civil society and the general public.

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<sup>124</sup> The post-2015 development framework, which will replace the Millennium Development Goals when they expire in 2015, is currently in the process of negotiation. Saferworld has set out how a future development agenda might contribute to sustainable peace in Saferworld, (2014), 'From the Sustainable Development Goals to the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Building a Consensus for Peace', <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/831-from-the-sustainable-development-goals-to-the-post-2015-development-agenda-building-a-consensus-for-peace>

<sup>125</sup> The Ammerdown Invitation, (2014), 'Security for the future: in search of a new vision', Open Democracy, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/ammerdown-invitation/security-for-future-in-search-of-new-vision>

**Should the UK plan to maintain its global influence? Should we aim for a national consensus on the UK's future place in the world?**

12. The traditional forms of UK global influence such as military and economic power may be increasingly less viable if we take a long-term and realistic approach to Britain's role in the world. However, this does not mean that the UK does not retain considerable influence, including in the form of soft power. The UK is still a significant player in shaping the world order, and the next National Security Strategy should prioritise objectives around UK leadership in setting strong international standards, such as through the pursuit of better global regulation of the arms trade (including continued support for the Arms Trade Treaty), a strong post-2015 development framework with peace, good governance and rule of law at its core, and support for multilateral and regional bodies to improve their effectiveness in promoting shared social goods.

13. The UK should, however, be realistic about its ability to promote peace on its own. In a changing world order, the balance of external influence in fragile and conflict-affected states is also changing. For example, China as the major investor in South Sudan's oil industry must be a key player in restoring peace to the country. In Somalia, Turkey is an increasingly significant actor through its humanitarian and diplomatic activities. So, along with continued support and engagement with international and multilateral organisations including the UN and the EU External Action Service, the UK should step up its engagement with China, Turkey and other rising powers in order to promote international cooperation on conflict prevention. Departments like DFID as well as UK civil society can make an important contribution in this respect, as they hold a wide range of development and other expertise that can inform progressive conversations about what works (and what doesn't) in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Conclusion.

14. The 2010 National Security Strategy, along with the Strategic Defence and Security Review and the Building Stability Overseas Strategy, set out a welcome UK commitment to preventing conflict and building peace. The next National Security Strategy should build upon this commitment and clearly set out how this vision will increasingly be operationalised in practice across government departments. A stronger and explicit focus on the overall objective of promoting sustainable peace – founded on human security and inclusive, fair, responsive and accountable states – across the whole of the UK's engagement in conflict-affected and fragile states would demonstrate a forward-looking and progressive approach to national security. The strategy must resist confining the UK to short-term, conflict-insensitive policies and practices that respond to narrowly-defined security or economic interests and seek to put the UK on a strong footing for securing its long-term interests.

Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR) – written evidence

**About SGR**

1. SGR is an independent UK-based membership organisation of about 900 natural scientists, social scientists, engineers, IT professionals and architects. Founded in 1992, we promote science, design and technology that contribute to peace, social justice, and environmental sustainability. SGR carries out research, education and advocacy work mainly focused on four main issues: security and disarmament; climate change and energy; who controls science and technology? and emerging technologies.
2. SGR has recently published an in-depth report entitled 'Offensive Insecurity: The Role of Science and Technology in UK Security Strategies'. In it, we critically assessed recent government policies and spending patterns related to the application of science and technology to security issues. This involved analysis of Ministry of Defence data on military R&D spending and a comparison of this with data on areas of civilian R&D which can make a contribution to security. Key evidence from this report and subsequent analysis form the basis of this submission. The references are given at the end of this submission and printed copies are being sent to the Committee.

***What should be the UK's national security priorities for the next twenty years, and how should these steer the next NSS?***

3. The UK government continues to be heavily focused on potential military threats and how they might be countered with military power. There is limited acknowledgement that military responses in recent years have not only failed to achieve stated objectives, but have often been counter-productive. There has been much less attention to non-military security threats and the need to tackle the roots of conflict to bring about a lasting peace – although this is slowly started to change. SGR's view is that the next NSS should be steered by a much greater focus on tackling the roots of conflict – which include a range of social and environmental factors such as resource depletion, climate change, economic injustice and the spread of military technologies. It should be more widely recognised that non-military security threats – such as climate change – are likely to become a much greater problem than conventional military threats.
4. The role of science and technology within this security landscape is critical. Decisions taken now on priorities for research and development – across the natural sciences, social sciences and engineering – will be central to shaping how the UK is able to deal (or not deal) with security problems far into the future.
5. SGR's assessment of recent security-related R&D spending in the UK concluded that there is a strong focus on military R&D with much lower levels of spending in areas which could help tackle the roots of conflict. For example:
  - a. The Ministry of Defence's annual spending on R&D (2008 to 2011) was between two and seven times the size of the public R&D spending that helps to tackle the roots of conflict. The latter R&D included work on international development and poverty alleviation, climate change impacts, sustainable energy technologies, food security, international relations, natural resource management, biodiversity, environmental risks and hazards, sustainable consumption and other measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
  - b. The area of the MoD's R&D with the highest budget was nuclear weapons systems. UK public R&D spending for nuclear weapons technologies was more than five times that on renewable energy technologies. This example is indicative of a strong focus on military technology with an 'offensive' or 'force projection'

- capability, with much less priority given to technologies which help tackle climate change, acknowledged by the government to be a major security threat.
- c. Our view is that public spending on military R&D – especially for ‘force projection’ – should be markedly reduced while that for tackling the roots of conflict should be markedly increased, with much greater integration of this work into UK policy-making circles.
  6. For some major security problems, the 20 year time horizon is too short, and a lack of consideration of longer-term effects could well lead to misallocation of current resources. This is true especially for climate change because time delays in the climate system mean that the full effects of current carbon emissions will not be felt for several decades.
  7. There should also be greater emphasis on increasing the resilience of the UK’s society and economy to social and environmental shocks, as well as to potential military threats. Several of the R&D areas discussed above – for example, sustainable energy systems – would be valuable for this purpose.

***Should the UK plan to maintain its global influence? Should we aim for a national consensus on the UK’s future place in the world?***

8. SGR supports the UK maintaining global influence through civilian action, especially through:
  - a. R&D focused on policies and technologies which strongly support environmentally sustainability, social justice and peace-building;
  - b. equitable trade and other economic policies;
  - c. official development assistance; and
  - d. taking a leading role in international environmental, disarmament and human rights treaties.
9. SGR supports the rapid shrinking of the role of UK military approaches to security problems.
10. We need a national debate on the UK’s role in the world. At the moment, the government’s main emphasis seems to be that the UK’s strategy should continue to include a major role for ‘force projection’. Public engagement strategies seem simply aimed at justifying, not debating, this position.

***How can the next NSS be made most useful in guiding decisions in Government and long-term spending decisions?***

11. At minimum, the NSS will need to:
  - a. outline a comprehensive set of major security risks, including those with a social, political, economic or environmental dimension;
  - b. highlight the range of options for trying to deal with them, from early preventative action to crisis management;
  - c. estimate the risks and costs of different courses of action/ inaction to allow decision-makers to consider which might be most appropriate at a given stage;
  - d. highlight the international co-operation necessary to increase the chances of success.

12. Critically, the NSS will need to include a wide range of civilian activities – for example, those listed in 5a above, which will have numerous other benefits beyond the security arena (such as the creation of skilled science and technology jobs in the sustainable energy sector). The NSS will also need to consider non-combat roles for the military – for example, supplying emergency aid when civilian options are not available.
13. In general, SGR's view is that there is a serious imbalance in current spending patterns which prioritise expensive, risky military technological options over cheaper, preventative civilian options. So arguably the most important role of the next NSS is to achieve a more reasonable balance.

***What are the main risks to the UK's national security? Is the Government's horizon-scanning effective, and are our national contingency plans adequate?***

14. There has been significant value in, for example, horizon scanning reports compiled by the MoD's Development, Concepts and Doctrines Centre. However, our view is that there have been major shortcomings in incorporating this and other assessments into UK security policies such as the last NSS and Strategic Defence and Security Review. In particular, we believe that security spending allocations are not well aligned with a realistic assessment of a range of security concerns. UK spending is excessively focused on developing and deploying military force projection which is no defence against threats such as terrorism, energy insecurity or climate change. In our view, budget allocations for military force projection should be reduced markedly and allocations increased to the areas listed in 5a above and to interventions such as diplomacy, civilian and humanitarian actions. We make a range of more specific suggestions in our report.

***How broadly should the NSS define national security?***

15. National security should be defined based on a broad range of factors which affect the stability of UK society. The academic literature has introduced concepts such as 'human security' and 'sustainable security' – which include social, economic and environmental factors – and these have been increasingly adopted by UN bodies. We share the view that application of these concepts is central in creating and maintaining national security.
16. Concepts of national security necessarily must include consideration of international security. The UK cannot insulate itself from international security problems through some sort of 'fortress mentality', and it must acknowledge that some of its approaches to national security concerns undermine international security. For example:
  - a. The continued deployment of nuclear weapons provides justification for non-nuclear weapons states to seek such weapons of mass destruction to seek to bolster their own security;
  - b. The continued deployment of nuclear weapons also exacerbates the risk of nuclear war – even a limited one – which would cause massive devastation, including global disruption of the climate system, threatening the national security of virtually every country on the planet;
  - c. The continued prominent role for 'force projection' provides a justification in the minds of some for asymmetric terrorist action against a broad range of Western interests (including the UK).



**Key references** (*printed copies will follow by post*)

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September 2014

Dr Daniel Stevens (University of Exeter) & Dr Nick Vaughan-Williams (University of Warwick) – written evidence

**Summary**

1. Citizens occupy an increasingly central role in the risk management cycle and their cooperation in building societal resilience is essential in the twenty-first century. However, despite the rhetoric of successive National Security Strategies (NSS), the methods by which risks and threats to the UK are assessed and prioritised do not consider the views of diverse publics. **The UK's national security priorities should reflect the concerns of citizens: to ignore this is itself potentially a risk to societal resilience and contingency planning.**
2. Little is known about how diverse publics view security, how they know and understand concepts of 'security' and 'threat', and which issues they find most 'threatening', and this is a significant blind spot. The evidence we present is based on a programme of ESRC-funded research that has sought to uncover and address this gap. **Our main findings address two priority themes raised by the Select Committee Announcement: methodology for risk and contingency planning and the scope of the NSS.** These findings can be summarised as follows.
  - a. Citizens identify different kinds of security threats at global, national, community, and personal levels.
  - b. Framing security threats at different levels will have significant consequences on threat perception and public policy preferences.
  - c. There is a gulf between 'official' and 'lay' knowledge and perception of security threats.
  - d. Awareness of government messages about security threats is low and does not lessen perceptions of threats; minority groups feel powerless in the formulation of national security policy.

3. These findings have **significant implications** ahead of the next Strategic Defence and Security Review and NSS:
  - a. If citizens' views on security threats are to be taken seriously and the content and credibility of the NSS is to be known and enhanced among diverse publics then more inclusive methodologies for formulating national security policy are required.
  - b. A more consultative approach would not only increase the democratic legitimacy of the NSS: in the longer term it would provide the footing for a more sustainable National Security Strategy, offer better value for money, and contribute towards greater societal resilience. These elements are all the more important in the context of diminished resources.

### About the Authors

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### Information for the Committee

1. Citizens are increasingly expected to play a central role in the national security architecture of Britain. The 2008 National Security Strategy (NSS) was committed to finding 'new opportunities to seek views from members of the public'. This was presented as 'the next step in a process of engagement designed to ensure that government thinking on national security constantly keeps pace with the rapidly evolving global security environment. Similarly, the 2010 NSS reiterated the 'need to build a much closer relationship between government, the private sector and the public when it comes to national security' and claimed that 'we all have a part to play in keeping the country safe – be it from terrorists, cyber attack or natural disasters'.
2. Yet despite the centrality of the citizen in the 2008 and 2010 NSS and an increasing emphasis on dialogue and inclusion, **successive governments have not sought to incorporate the diverse views of the public in the assessment and prioritisation of risk and threat**. The methodology underpinning the tiered list of threats in the NSS closes off wider public consultation and debate about national security priorities. By

calculating risk only according to the likelihood of occurrence and scale of impact at the national level the NSS ignores the range of issues that shape everyday experiences of threat and security among diverse publics. Both elements need to be combined in an enhanced methodology.

3. **The stakes in contemporary security threat perceptions are high for government and citizens alike.** While liberal democracies attempt to balance civil liberties and security, a threatened public skews the trade-off toward the latter, tending to favour repression, intolerance, exclusionist, and potentially aggressive attitudes toward minorities, and to show a greater willingness to support war against external sources of threat.
4. A threatened public may be more receptive to the enhancement of otherwise unpopular or illiberal policies. Indeed, the combination of threats and the belief that elites sanction punitive actions that combat threats is particularly dangerous to democracy. Instead of adapting levels of protection to the perceived existence of threats, it may lead to the modulation of threat perceptions in order to justify enhanced levels of protection, such that **protection itself may become a security threat.**
5. Dominant voices in academia and policy-making communities alike have privileged elite knowledge and understanding about security. To some extent this is to be expected given the demands of strategy at a national level, but these dynamics have reproduced a blind spot such that **there is little awareness of how security, threat, and risk is known and experienced in different ways by diverse publics.** How do 'ordinary' people think about threat and security? What issues do they find threatening and why?
6. Our programme of research included a **nationally representative online survey** of 2,000 participants and 20 in-depth focus groups across six British cities: Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leicester, London, and Oldham. Groups varied according to gender, socio-economic background, faith, age, and included 60 participants in total (31 female, 29 male) (see Appendix 1).
7. Individuals identify different kinds of threats at the global, national, community, and personal levels: members of the British public perceive the most threats at the global level and the least at the community and personal levels, and the kinds of threats they identify as global or national tend to differ from those they identify as community or personal. **The national level is not one that resonates with most citizens.**
8. The online survey gauged the views of a diverse sample of social, multi ethnic and religious backgrounds. It showed that **people who see more national threats tend to be more intolerant of minorities and have a stronger white identity, while people who perceive threats as global are more tolerant of minorities and have a weaker white identity.** These differences extend to policy preferences, where more global threats appear to favour solutions such as international aid over straightforward

security policies, whereas perceptions of more national threats led to a preference for enhanced security measures.

9. **Framing security threats as ‘international’ rather than ‘national’ may have very different consequences on who is threatened and on public preferences for policies such as spending on defence and security.** This has potentially important ramifications for initiatives designed to shape perceptions of security threats and efforts to mitigate them and/or offer reassurance.
10. **There is a significant gap between the issues that citizens find threatening to their security and that of their communities on the one hand and those listed in the 2010 NSS.** Only 3% of our respondents saw ‘International Terrorism’ – a Tier One threat – as a pressing security threat to themselves, their families, and local communities in their everyday lives. Individuals are more concerned with online banking and cyber-bullying than the issue of ‘hostile attacks on UK cyber space by other states and large scale cyber crime’ – also listed as a top-tier risk. Other priority issues not mentioned in the 2010 NSS are financial insecurity, local crime, and Islamophobia among Muslims. **The issues listed in the NSS appear strange and aloof: the understanding of security employed needs to be broadened and deepened to reflect the security concerns of diverse publics.**
11. There are a number of initiatives to enlist the support of citizens throughout the risk management cycle, but **there is little public awareness of or appetite for engagement with government-led initiatives.** Posters and announcements in public spaces enjoin ‘citizen-detectives’ to be vigilant at all times and call hotlines to report any behaviour that they deem to be ‘suspicious’. At ports, airports, and international railway stations, ‘trusted’ travellers are expected to interact willingly with biometric technologies such as ‘e-Gates’ in order to facilitate identity-based risk management and minimise queues. Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) invite individuals to feed into local community risk registers in order to identify the greatest risks in a given area and then plan and exercise to help mitigate against those risks. **Among minority communities in particular there is evidence of fear of involvement and an association between awareness of government messages and perceptions of more rather than less threat.** To be effective in encouraging the support of citizens and to ensure their productive engagement in building societal resilience their views need to be built into and reflected in the NSS.
12. In general, **focus groups said they feel less secure now than in the past.** The invocation of 9/11 as a turning point was common and conversations with older groups in particular tended to contrast today’s climate of fear and anxiety as being higher when compared to the eras of the Cold War. Our focus groups suggest **for some religious and ethnic groups the threat of being stereotyped and connected with terrorist activity was a barrier to engagement with the risk management cycle.** There is a bifurcation between those for whom heightened surveillance necessitates and justifies suspicion of others and those for whom heightened surveillance means they feel unfairly targeted because of their race.

13. Our groups also suggest that **many British citizens feel disenfranchised from the NSS**, which is in their name and yet fails to include and reflect their priorities. Listening to voices otherwise marginalised by national security strategy offers new opportunities to test existing agendas and set new ones:

- “Sometimes you feel marginalised and we feel our voices are not being heard. These kinds of sessions need to be organised across the country on a much bigger scale. How long are people going to wait while the common man is suffering. That is the thing. They need to act” (Azza, London).
- “The role of government should be to consult with the public [...] meetings like this for example will bring things to mind that you might not normally think of and this is an opportunity for potentially new ideas through the likes of research to be fed up through the ranks”. (Bob, Cardiff).

14. Everyday views, anecdotes, and stories serve as important reminders that the idea of a singular ‘public’ is neither possible nor desirable to sustain when identifying and seeking to mitigate security threats. If governments are committed to incorporating the views of citizens more prominently in matters of security – as indicated by the 2008 and 2010 NSS – then a first move would be to acknowledge and find ways at a local level to engage productively with diverse publics. The programme of surveys and focus groups we undertook offers guidance for how this might be achieved in a new enhanced methodology for the next NSS. **To continue to ignore the views and concerns of diverse publics in the NSS is itself potentially a risk to national security, contingency planning, and societal resilience.**

*Daniel Stevens and Nick Vaughan-Williams, 30 September 2014*

## Notes

This evidence is based on a programme of research carried out between March 2012 and July 2013 by Stevens and Vaughan-Williams, entitled ‘Public Perceptions of Threat in Britain: Security in an Age of Austerity, which was funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ES/J004596/1).

The project sought to investigate:

- How members of the public understand the concepts of "threat" and "security";
- What they consider to be the most pressing threats to their security;
- Whether their views coincide with notions of threat and how to respond to and mitigate them in the government's National Security Strategy.

The research was based on 20 mini-groups of three respondents from the main regions of Britain, as well as a large-scale survey of 2,000 respondents.

Published document to accompany this evidence:

- D. Stevens and N. Vaughan-Williams (2014) 'Citizens and Security Threats: Issues, Perceptions, and Consequences Beyond the National Frame', *British Journal of Political Science*. Forthcoming. Available on First View:  
<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=9289282&fulltextType=RA&fileId=S0007123414000143>

Transparency International UK, International Defence & Security Programme – written evidence

### Executive summary and recommendations

1. The 2010 [National Security Strategy](#) (NSS) states that the UK's national interest comprises 'security, prosperity and freedom' (para 0.9), and that national security requires that values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law are recognised internationally (p. 4). While it lists a number of risks to UK national security, **the NSS does not recognise one issue which poses significant risks to international security, prosperity and the rule of law: corruption**. Transparency International-UK International Defence and Security Programme believes that the risk posed by corruption should be an integral part of the next National Security Strategy.
2. Corrupt practices adversely affect the UK's national security. They weaken the legitimacy of governments, hamper the development of licit economies, and fuel societal grievances, fostering instability and contributing to state failure and conflict in regions of strategic importance to the UK. Corruption in the defence sector is particularly pernicious as it undermines the state's ability to protect its citizens and respond to threats. Corrupt practices also distort international markets, reduce business opportunities, and waste money in aid and trade.
3. TI-UK DSP **recommends that corruption is recognised as a threat to the UK's national security and prosperity, and ways of mitigating it are incorporated into security and defence policies**. Specific recommendations include:
  - that levels of corruption risks, particularly in the defence and security sectors, are incorporated into assessing risks to the security and prosperity of the UK;
  - that security and defence assistance initiatives explicitly recognise the risks that corruption poses and that anti-corruption, integrity and institution-building are included as an integral part of training of international partners' forces;
  - that the UK government works with like-minded partners to address corruption risks in international organisations;
  - that the UK recognises that investing in Transparency, Accountability and Counter-Corruption (TACC) capacity is likely to be an asset in building relationships with allies, including the United States and NATO;
  - that all stabilisation mission mandates incorporate the requirement to address corruption risks; this includes developing an accurate understanding of corrupt

networks and types of corruption, designing targeted measures to tackle them, and ensuring that personnel are trained in tackling corruption risks;

- that reserve recruitment include those with skills and expertise relevant to countering corruption, ensuring that the armed forces have access to the right specialists;
- that assembling and analysing evidence of corruption risks is incorporated into the tasking of military intelligence gathering;
- that the government not authorise a transfer of arms when there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a material risk of an arms transfer involving corrupt practices or corruption at any stage of the transfer. This should include government-to-government deals and pay particular attention to the role of brokers, agents, and intermediaries.

### Background

4. Transparency International (TI) is widely recognised as the world's leading anti-corruption organisation. Its London-based [Defence and Security Programme](#) run by TI-UK (TI-UK DSP) has been working constructively with the defence industry, government defence establishments, and civil society around the world for more than 10 years to develop practical tools to address corruption risks in defence and security. TI-UK DSP has worked with NATO to develop and implement its [Building Integrity Programme](#) and carries out anti-corruption training in co-operation with the UK Defence Academy. It also conducts, supports and disseminates original research enabling better understanding of corruption risks in the security and defence sector. Its flagship tools are the [Government Defence Anti-Corruption Index](#) and the [Defence Companies Anti-Corruption Index](#), which measure corruption risks and disseminate best practice in the defence and security sector. TI-UK DSP receives funding from, among others, the UK Department for International Development, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the UK Ministry of Defence.

### Introduction

5. The Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy has [called](#) for submissions addressing 6 main areas that pertain to the next National Security Strategy, to be adopted in 2015. TI-UK DSP offers practical recommendations for three of those areas: 1) scope of the next National Security Strategy; 2) risk and contingency planning; and 3) international relationships. We also propose practical measures to support the implementation of our recommendations.

6. Our primary recommendation is **that corruption is recognised as a threat to the UK's national security and incorporated into security and defence policies, including international crisis prevention and management and security and defence assistance.** It

should be taken into account when assessing risks and when planning responses, particularly those that pertain to security and defence assistance and military interventions.

7. The issue of corruption as a threat to stability and peace has been steadily gaining recognition, including within the UK government, but this recognition has been relatively recent. By including corruption as relevant to issues of national security and prosperity, the 2015 National Security Strategy would contribute to the growing awareness of the risks carried by corrupt practices and would prompt the inclusion of anti-corruption measures in policies across the Government.

### Corruption and national security

**Corruption** is defined as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.

**Corruption risk** refers to the degree of probability that corruption occurs within a certain area or activity, and the potential cost associated with that corruption. It thus reflects the probability that such losses, whether monetary, social, or political, can arise; and reflects the degree of such cost when it occurs.

8. The 2010 [National Security Strategy](#) (NSS) states that the UK's national interest comprises 'security, prosperity and freedom' (para 0.9), and that national security requires that values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law are promoted internationally (p. 4). The NSS also lists a number of risks to UK national security. However, it does not recognise one issue which poses significant risks to international security, stability, prosperity and the rule of law: corruption, which the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace has recently [referred to](#) as the 'unrecognized threat to international security'.

9. Corrupt practices constitute a major risk to national and international security. They threaten international peace and security—including in regions of strategic importance to the UK—by adding to and exacerbating other risks, including sectarian cleavages and weak institutions. Corrupt practices weaken the rule of law, create a culture of impunity, weaken the legitimacy of governments, hamper the development of strong licit economies, and make recourse to state institutions almost impossible, fuelling grievances and aiding the recruitment of insurgents and terrorists. They diminish the resilience of state structures, making it more difficult for states to withstand shocks and react to conflicts and violence.<sup>126</sup> Corruption in the defence sector is particularly pernicious as it undermines the state's ability to protect its citizens, limits its ability to respond to threats, and can spill over into other

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<sup>126</sup> Department for International Development, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence, [Building Stability Overseas Strategy](#), 2011, para 3.3.



sectors. Corrupt practices also distort international markets, reduce business opportunities and waste money.

10. Corruption and conflict are strongly correlated: twelve out of fifteen countries ranked lowest in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index are also home to insurgencies or extremist groups.<sup>127</sup> Fallout from embedded, systemic corruption links such seemingly disparate events as the Arab Spring, conflict in Ukraine, the failure of the Malian army in 2012 and of the [Iraqi security forces](#) in the face of ISIS in 2014. These can carry security risks for the UK as they threaten regional stability and expose the fragility and societal illegitimacy of state structures. Corruption and lack of transparency in the defence and security can also lead to proliferation of weapons and to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials being easier to obtain for extremist groups (para 0.18).

11. Not only does corruption threaten peace, security and prosperity, it can also reduce the effectiveness of measures aimed at enhancing stability and state capacity. If not taken into account, it can undermine efforts to foster rule of law. Corruption wastes international aid, as funds are misappropriated or diverted by corrupt networks permeating governments. Unrecognised and not counteracted, it can damage the legitimacy of international missions in fragile states and threaten mission success.<sup>128</sup>

12. The issue of corruption as a threat to stability and peace has been steadily gaining recognition, including within the UK government, but this recognition has been relatively recent. The issue came to the top of the international security agenda around 2011, when its impact on the situation in Afghanistan and the threat it posed to the success of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission was recognised. Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, observed that some Afghan institutions which were central to the transition of power from ISAF to local forces were deeply corrupt and subverted by criminal networks, and conceded that American ‘inattention’ to how aid and reconstruction funds were disbursed had contributed to the growth of the problem.<sup>129</sup> Generals Stanley McChrystal and David Petraeus, both ISAF commanders, recognised that the achievement of the counter-insurgency goals ‘depend on fighting corruption’, which Afghans have identified as the most important reason behind support for the Taliban over the Karzai government. Fighting corruption, one NATO official said, was ‘a moral imperative, and [...] an operational imperative’.<sup>130</sup> General Sir Nick Carter, Chief of the General Staff and former Deputy Commander of ISAF, stressed the malign influence of corruption, which created a culture of impunity and fuelled the insurgency; he also accepted that ISAF lacked

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<sup>127</sup> Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, [Corruption: The Unrecognized Threat to International Security](#), 2014, p. 4

<sup>128</sup> TI-UK DSP, [Corruption Threats and International Missions: Practical Guidance for Leaders](#), pp. 7-13; TI-UK DSP and TI Germany, [Corruption as a Threat to Stability and Peace](#), 2012, pp. 17-18.

<sup>129</sup> ‘[Mullen warns of Afghanistan transition corruption](#)’, *Defense News*, 1 August 2011, accessed September 2014.

<sup>130</sup> Joshua Partlow, ‘[For General Petraeus, battling corruption in Afghanistan is a priority](#)’, *Washington Post*, 29 July 2010, accessed September 2014.

understanding of the problem and actually exacerbated it through inadequate contracting and logistics procedures. Achieving ISAF's operational goals required it to recognise that these essentially political issues were relevant to security-related outcomes and needed to be addressed through a comprehensive political-military strategy.<sup>131</sup>

13. Within the UK security policies, the threat posed by corruption is not yet uniformly recognised. The 2010 NSS only mentions corruption once (p. 13), in the context of desired progress in Afghanistan and without recognising its wider implications, and the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), which fleshes out some of the NSS implementation strategies, does not mention corruption at all. The [International Defence Engagement Strategy](#), which focuses on using defence assets in relationship-building, does not mention corruption risks or anti-corruption activities, even though corruption can have a severe impact on the effectiveness of security sector reform and stabilisation missions.

14. The FCO-based Stabilisation Unit recognises that corruption plays an important role in conflict environments and that stabilisation operations can in fact entrench it,<sup>132</sup> and the FCO/DfID/MOD [Building Stability Overseas Strategy](#) recognises that '[v]iolent conflict is closely linked to bad governance, corruption and the lack of broad-based economic development' (para 3.3.). The 2013 [Serious and Organised Crime Strategy](#) recognises that '[b]ribery and corruption are tools of serious and organised crime', and organised crime in turn threatens national security (paras 1.26 and 1.3). At the 2014 Munich Security Conference, the then- Secretary of State for Defence Philip Hammond stated:

[T]op-down institution building, re-enforcement of capacity and challenging institutionalised corruption in particular, [...] is not just a moral imperative. It is a practical imperative. Anyone who is familiar with Afghanistan, ... will understand how institutionalised corruption simply saps the ability of the society, of the economy to operate efficiently and effectively.<sup>133</sup>

15. This inconsistent treatment in UK policy indicates that corruption is not yet seen as relevant to all aspects of national and international security. This is a mistake, as it hampers the development of an integrated strategy for reducing the risk of instability and conflict. Corruption is relevant to the risks and threats identified by the NSS, including instability caused by fragile states, and to the responses identified by the SDSR. Given that in conflict environments military personnel usually play a more significant role than civilians, it is imperative that they also have an awareness of the importance of corruption issues and expertise in how to counter them. Without explicit, high-level recognition of the threat posed by corruption to stability and peace, it is unlikely that its pernicious influence will be

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<sup>131</sup> R. Jeffrey Smith, '[U.S. military describes its mistakes in Afghanistan](#)', The Center for Public Integrity, 6 May 2014, accessed September 2014; General Sir Nick Carter, '[Drawing lessons from Afghanistan](#)', *The British Army Journal* 2011, accessed September 2014.

<sup>132</sup> Stabilisation Unit, '[Addressing Corruption in Stabilisation Environments](#)', *Stabilisation Issues Notes* 2012, accessed September 2014.

<sup>133</sup> Philip Hammond, Secretary of Defence, *Remarks at the Munich Security Conference*, 1 February 2014.

recognised and counteracted across the board. This is the role that the 2015 NSS should play.

### Scope of the NSS

16. While awareness of corruption as a threat has been steadily rising, it tends to be pushed aside when issues perceived as more urgent—such as military crises—arise. **We recommend that the 2015 NSS explicitly recognises corruption, which increases the likelihood of state failure and conflict, among the most significant threats to national and international security.** This recognition is the best way to ensure that a focus on anti-corruption activities and long-term preventive strategies informs all aspects of the implementation of the NSS, including security and defence assistance and stabilisation missions.

17. The Committee has suggested that the 2010 NSS does not pay enough attention to international economic instability. TI-UK DSP agrees. International economic instability and distortion of international business opportunities—both fostered by corrupt practices—is a risk for a nation as dependent on open markets as the UK. **We recommend that corruption and ensuing economic instability are recognised as a risk to the UK's economic prosperity.**

### Risk assessment: factoring in corruption

18. The two major aspects of risk assessment are the likelihood of something happening and the severity of its consequences. Corruption increases the likelihood of conflict and instability occurring, and therefore should be incorporated into security risk assessments. **We recommend that levels of corruption, particularly in the defence and security sectors, are incorporated into assessing the likelihood of conflict and instability.**

### International partnerships

19. The SDSR includes engagement with, and reform of, the UN and NATO as one of the UK's five priorities in international engagement (paras 5.2, 5.6, 5.11). The UN plays a vital role in supporting peace and stability, not least through its crisis response and peacekeeping operations. However, in order for the organisation to achieve its full potential, it needs to address the risk of corruption on operations and in its procedures.<sup>134</sup> Recent reports of the UN Board of Auditors strongly suggest that the UN needs to strengthen the way it works with implementing partners in order to reduce the risk of fraud and thus decreased efficiency.<sup>135</sup> On its part, NATO also needs to improve its record on transparency and accountability, revitalise programmes such as Building Integrity, and incorporate anti-

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<sup>134</sup> TI-UK DSP, *Corruption in Peacekeeping. Strengthening Peacekeeping and the United Nations*, 2012, pp. 3-11.

<sup>135</sup> 'Financial reports and audited financial statements for the biennium ended 31 December 2013 and the Report of the Board of Auditors', Vol. 1, New York: United Nations 2014, pp. 40-53. Available at [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/5\(VOL.I\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/5(VOL.I)), accessed September 2014.

corruption guidance into its mission mandates.<sup>136</sup> **We recommend that the UK government works with like-minded partners to address corruption risks and lack of transparency in international organisations.**

20. The NSS stresses the imperative of the UK working with partners—particularly the United States—to address risks to national security (para 2.11). The SDSR states that utility to the UK's partners and allies is one of the criteria which should be applied to whether capacities should be preserved and developed (para 2.9), and adds that partner capacity building and cooperation on international interventions constitute important aspects of the U.S.-UK relationship (para 5.6). Transparency, Accountability and Counter-Corruption (TACC) expertise is one asset which the UK should build up and which would be welcomed by partners, particularly by the United States. The UK already has some expertise in this area, through the TI-UK DSP and the 'Building Integrity' programme in the UK Defence Academy, funded by the DfID / FCO / MOD Conflict, Security and Stabilisation Fund. This is a good base on which to build capability which would not only address important issues, but could also be used in building relationships. The 2013 TI-UK DSP's Government Defence Anti-Corruption Index has found that the United States was one of only two countries which has military doctrine addressing corruption on operations;<sup>137</sup> the steadily rising level of attention the U.S. is giving to the nexus of corruption and security is also exemplified by the establishment of Task Force Shafafiyat (Transparency) and the appointment of Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). NATO's Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre also advises that counteracting corruption risks needs to be incorporated into mission doctrine and that personnel need to possess expertise necessary to deal with corruption risks.<sup>138</sup> Given the U.S. and NATO interest in anti-corruption measures on operations, allied expertise and capacity on the issue would likely be very welcome. **We recommend that the UK invests in TACC capacity as one way to strengthen its international partnerships, particularly those with the United States and within NATO.**

21. The SDSR states that 'non-operational defence engagement' would be ramped up: new initiatives would include training, joint exercises, and despatching civilian policy advisers to foreign forces and defence ministries (para 4.B.2). TI-UK DSP welcomes defence engagement initiatives, but cautions against focussing them solely on tactical training and assistance. The example of Mali and the virtual collapse of its security forces vividly illustrates the dangers of limiting security and defence assistance to tactical and operational training. General Carter Ham of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) acknowledged that with training focussed almost entirely on tactical and operational aspects, ethics, integrity and responsibility had been neglected – with dire consequences.<sup>139</sup> The same issues are playing

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<sup>136</sup> Leah Wawro, TI-UK DSP, [NATO's black hole: New report reveals excessive secrecy](#), 11 June 2014, accessed September 2014.

<sup>137</sup> See 'Operations', [Government Defence Anti-Corruption Index 2013](#), accessed September 2014.

<sup>138</sup> NATO's Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre (JALLC), [Counter- and Anti-Corruption. Theory and Practice from NATO Operations](#), 2013, accessed September 2014, p. iv.

<sup>139</sup> ['Mali crisis: US admits mistakes in training local troops'](#), BBC News, 25 January 2013, accessed September 2014.

out in Iraq in 2014. Without training in ethics, integrity, and anti-corruption issues, and making defence staff aware of practical mechanisms to address the pernicious influence of corruption, security and defence assistance will not be effective. **We recommend that security and defence assistance initiatives explicitly recognise the risk from corruption and that ethics, anti-corruption and integrity engagement are made an integral part of training of international partners' forces.**

#### Corruption threats and the NSS: a few notes on implementation

22. The 2015 National Security Strategy will be fleshed out through a number of subsequent policies, including the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review. We realise that the priority of the Committee is the NSS; however, we would like to provide a few examples of how the focus on corruption can be translated into concrete initiatives, to illustrate the feasibility of addressing corruption through national security initiatives.

23. Corruption is a threat to the success of stabilisation missions and thus can damage an important tool for fostering stability and peace. If not addressed, corruption will threaten mission objectives such as better governance and economic development. It can also damage the legitimacy of the mission itself if the international forces are seen to be engaging with and supporting corrupt actors. In counteracting corruption, stabilisation missions face a complex task, as different types of corruption require different reform packages.<sup>140</sup> The complexity of the issue, however, should not be license to ignore it: as the example of Afghanistan suggests, if not addressed, entrenched corruption will decrease security levels and government effectiveness in the long term, thus necessitating longer mission deployments.<sup>141</sup> **We recommend that all mission mandates incorporate anti-corruption measures. This should include developing an accurate understanding of corrupt networks, types of corruption, and targeted measures to tackle them, and training for civilian and military personnel on tackling corruption risks.** In a practical anti-corruption [handbook](#) aimed at military leaders, TI-UK DSP has identified ten pathways through which corruption affects peace and stability, including criminal patronage networks (CPNs), which operate along tribal, sectarian or ethnic lines; military and police corruption; diversion of foreign aid; and exploitation of natural assets.<sup>142</sup> Disrupting these pathways is a good starting point for practical measures aimed at increasing legitimacy and effectiveness of state institutions.

24. The [Future Army 2020](#) programme is based on reserves playing a greater role in support of regular units. TI-UK DSP thinks that this is an opportunity to embed Transparency, Accountability and Counter-Corruption (TACC) expertise in the armed forces: the

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<sup>140</sup> [Addressing Corruption in Stabilisation Environments](#), p.1.

<sup>141</sup> JALLC, [Counter- and Anti-Corruption](#), paras 30-37; TI-UK DSP, *International Community and Corruption in Afghanistan* (working title), forthcoming, January 2015.

<sup>142</sup> [Corruption Threats and International Missions](#), pp. 15-19.

recruitment drive for reservists should draw on the expertise which already exists in the private and wider public sector in forensic accounting and investigation, including countering money laundering. **We recommend that reserve recruitment include those with existing skills and expertise relevant to anti-corruption, ensuring that the armed forces have access to the right specialists when they are needed most.**

25. Effective anti-corruption measures cannot be implemented without adequate intelligence about corrupt networks and pathways through which corruption works. This requires refocusing the tasking of intelligence effort on the activities of the host government and allies as well as the acquisition of intelligence on the enemy. 'Actionable intelligence' should not mean only intelligence leading to military action, but also that which leads to targeted anti-corruption initiatives being designed and makes it possible to change the structure of incentives and isolate groups which spoil the settlement. **We recommend that the tasking of military intelligence gathering be extended to include the acquisition and analysis of information and evidence on corruption.**

26. The international arms trade is among the most corruption-prone sectors. Corrupt practices in arms transfers have negative consequences for human rights and sustainable development, particularly but not only in the importing states, as well as for efforts to combat violent organised crime and terrorism. Corruption undermines the ability of states to control the diversion of weapons from their intended end-users and can facilitate the proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons. Corruption also inflates the cost and/or reduces the quantity or quality of the weapons which nations acquire to defend themselves. **We recommend that the government should not authorise a transfer of arms when there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a material risk of an arms transfer involving corrupt practices or corruption at any stage of the transfer. This should include government-to-government deals and pay particular attention to the role of brokers, agents, and intermediaries.**

30 September 2014